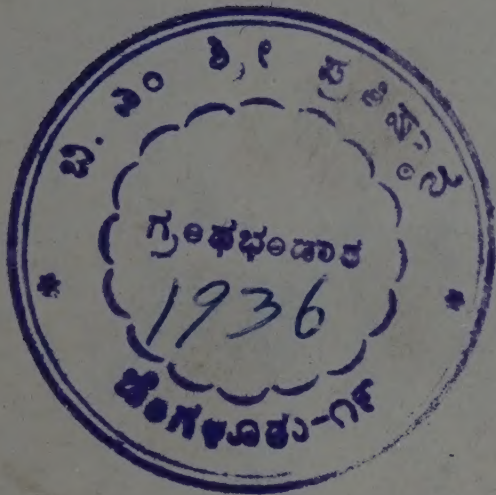
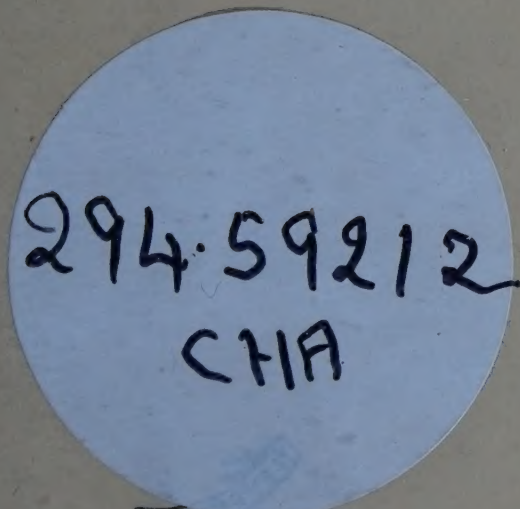


1936

THE CONCEPT OF COSMIC HARMONY IN THE R̥g-VEDA



G. N. CHAKRAVARTHY, M.A.



PRASARANGA
UNIVERSITY OF MYSORE
MYSORE-6

BY THE SAME AUTHOR
(KANNADA)

1. ಋಕ್ಸಂಹಿತಾಸಾರ:—Selections from the Rg-Veda with Kannada explanations and notes.

2. ಇಂದಿನ ವೈಜ್ಞಾನಿಕಯುಗದಲ್ಲಿ ವೇದದ ಸ್ಥಾನ:
The Place of the Veda in the Age of Science.
(Introduction to Rk Samhitāsāra).

Opinions :—

“ A learned treatise The volume under review bears testimony not only to the wide range of the author's scholarship, but also to the care and devotion bestowed on the compilation of the work, which is a valuable contribution.”

—*The Hindu.*

* * *

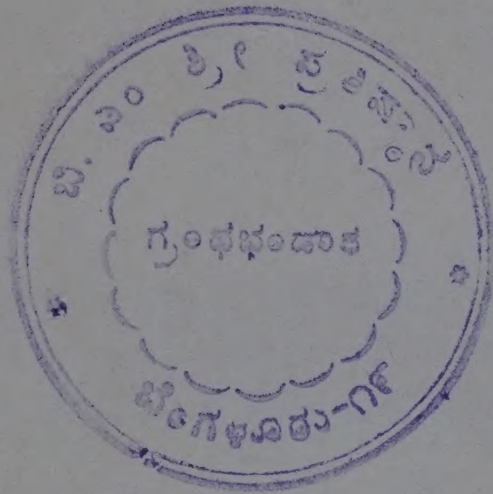
“ A well-reasoned thesis The select hymns are accompanied by fluent renderings in Kannada, notes and explanations. A very welcome addition to Vedic literature.”

—*Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Journal.*

* * *

“ The introduction is a brilliant argument establishing the status of the Vedas in the scientific age of today. The author has carefully selected the mantras and shows how cogent and consistent Philosophy runs through all the texts of the Vedas binding them to-gether as one superb system. A valuable contribution to a proper understanding of the Vedic literature.”

—*Indian Express.*



The Concept OF Cosmic Harmony in the Rg Veda

G. N. CHAKRAVARTHY, M.A.

READER IN SANSKRIT

St. Philomena's College, Mysore

PRASARANGA

UNIVERSITY OF MYSORE

MYSORE-6

First Edition 1966

All rights reserved

K 294.59212

CHA

Publisher:

DIRECTOR
PRASARANGA
MANASAGANGOTRI
MYSORE-6
ಕೃಮ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ 1936
ವರ್ಗ
ವರ್ಗ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ
ಬಿಂಡ್ ಕಾಲ್ Price: 28-8-85
Ordinary Rs. 5
ಬೆಲೆ Calico Rs. 7

೨೭೭೯

PRINTED AT THE BANGALORE PRESS
BRANCH, MYSORE



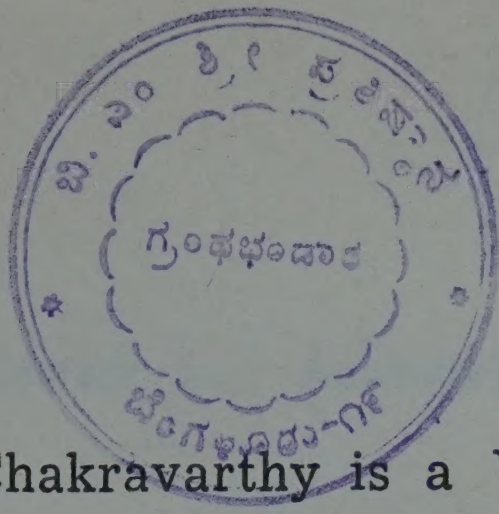
To

Swami Vivekananda

and

Dr. Radhakrishnan

the great Integrators



Sri G. N. Chakravorthy is a Veteran Vedic Scholar. His Kannada work on the same theme “RKSAMHITĀSĀRA” has earned him a well deserved recognition among the Kannadigas in general and scholars in particular. The work we are now gladly publishing “The Concept of Cosmic Harmony in the Rg-Veda” exhibits the width of Vedic scholarship of the author and the facility with which he expounds the intricate concepts of the Vedic seers.

We are grateful to Sri G. N. Chakravorthy for kindly permitting us to publish this valuable work.

PRABHU SHANKARA
Director,
'Prasaranga'
Manasagangotri, Mysore.



Author's Testimony and Acknowledgments

Some years ago I requested my friend and well-wisher, Sri T. S. Shama Rao, the then editor of the *Prabuddha Karnataka*, to publish an article of mine on the Rk Samhita. After going through the article he was kind enough to suggest that I should expand it into a book. This humble effort of mine is the fruit of that suggestion.

It is a well-known fact that the philological school of Vedic commentators, largely, though not wholly, western scholars, are of the view that the monistic idea of Supreme Reality evolved into the Rk Samhita only gradually and culminated in the upanishads. I must confess that, before I had delved into the Rk Samhita I was myself considerably influenced by this view and accepted it without question. But, when I had occasion to study the Rk Samhita intensively, the scales seemed to fall from my eyes, and I began to realise that Monism, far from being the result only of a slow and laboured evolution finding its perfect expression in the upanishads, was an idea pervading the entire body of RK Samhita texts. It began to dawn on me too that the distinction usually drawn by many vedic scholars between the significance of the Karma and Jnana Kandas of the vedas is also rather superficial and artificial. My deep study, convinced me more and more that all statements in the Samhita texts which seemed to contradict the monistic idea should be interpreted so as to present a consistent and harmonious account of the vadas as a whole, in the light of those texts which seem clearly to be intended to reconcile such apparent contradictions.

What I have stated above would also indicate that the Rk Samhita texts which speak of a multiplicity of gods should also be interpreted so as to be consistent with the central theme of the Rk Samhita, namely the idea of monism.

I deeply regret that, owing to the non-availability of the types in the Press, it has not been possible to use diacritical marks to indicate the pronunciation of certain Vedic words like वैश्वानर, मातरीश्वन्, अक्षर which are printed in

Roman script. Readers are requested to bear with me for this real shortcoming in this book.

The late Dr. Cunhan Raja, who was the Professor of Sanskrit in the University of Madras and a well-known Vadic scholar, was good enough to study this book intensively and write a preface for it in a far more elaborate and detailed manner than I had ventured to hope for. While expressing my deep debt of gratitude to him, I would be failing in my duty if I did not mention my poignant sorrow that he is no more and that I have not now the good fortune to present to him a printed copy of the book.

I remain grateful to the University of Mysore for the honour of its association with this publication and in this connection it is my pleasant duty to acknowledge my indebtedness to Registrars Sri K. R. Ramachandran and Sri P. Mallikarjunappa, Director, Dr. Prabhushankar, Professors T. L. Kasturi Rangacharya and M. Yamunacharya, Dr. B. V. Subbarayappa and Sri K. T. Veerappa.

My special debt is due to my friend and scholar Sri K. V. Sreenivasa Tatacharya for his valuable contributions towards clarity and adequate expressions in English. I owe much to Dr. A. N. Narasimhaiah, and the members of the family of the late Advocate Sri K. Puttu Rao, my benefactors in a needy hour and who helped me to further my intellectual activities. The same indebtedness I owe to the authorities of the St. Philomena's College and particularly to the late Rev. Fr. N. T. Thomas, Rev. fathers Fluery and Vazapally. I am thankful to Sri Senai, Manager of the Canara Bank, Mysore, Sri B. N. Naik, Sri B. V. Balasubrahmanyam of Najangud, Sri M. S. Krishna Rao, my colleague, Topiwala Padmarajiah and M. M. Kaveriappa for their kind encouragement.

I owe my mental peace and leisure to my wife Smt. Ratnamma and to my son Sri N. S. Chakravarthy. I thank Sri M. Sundararaj and the staff of the Bangalore Press, Mysore Branch, who helped me in correcting the proofs.

G. N. CHAKRAVARTHY

FOREWORD

In this work the main attempt of Sri Chakravarthi is to show that there is a profound philosophy in the Rg Veda. In ancient times, the Vedas were considered as eternal without any authorship, and that the Vedas contain the entire wisdom of man; there is nothing that is not in the Vedas. In recent times, the position swung to the other extreme. The Vedas are considered as pastoral poetry of a primitive people who were nomadic in their habits, wandering from place to place in search of water and pasture for their agriculture and for their cattle and also for their own living. They sang in praise of the spirits presiding over the various objects of the world in order to propitiate them and thus to ward off any danger from their wrath and also in order to secure any boons they may confer.

The first position of ancient India is true in a certain way; it is not literally true. But the second position is absolutely untenable. The Rg Veda contains poetry of the highest order embodying the profound thoughts of a nation who had developed an advanced culture. This is the position that is attempted to be maintained in the work now under consideration. This is not the first time that there has been such an attempt on the part of scholars. But such scholars are a few in number and their views have not yet been brought to the forefront in the matter of presenting the ancient culture of India to the world. The view that in the Rg Veda itself there is little of philosophy, that in the Rg Veda itself there is only a groping through the glooms of superstition and that it is in the Upanisads that we see some rays of the light of philosophical thought in India and that there is a tone of antagonism found in the Upanisads against the Rg Vedas, is what is held by people who are recognised as the true exponents of India's ancient wisdom and also what is generally accepted in the world.

Although the views expressed in the present book have been given expression to by other scholars, there is still an originality and a freshness in the method of handling the problem in the present work. Further, no amount of work done in this field will become an unwanted repetition because of the popularity of the other views in the world. It is this other view that holds the ground and there is need for a united action to replace it by the right view.

The book is in four chapters with an elaborate introduction. The first chapter deals with Isvara and the second chapter deals with the Cosmic Law under two headings of the Rta and Yajna. The third chapter is about the end of human life, namely, material wealth and spiritual wealth, in two sections. The last chapter deals with the means for the attainment of the highest goal of man. The main thesis expounded in the book is that man's life is not mere series of disconnected events, that the close of such a series is not the end of the life of an individual and that there is a beyond and a goal in that beyond. It is explained in the work that such views are plain in the Rg Veda itself. To emphasise Iswara too much is to ignore the world and the worldly aspects in man's life and to ignore God is to deny some lofty ideal of lasting value in man's life. What is required is a synthesis of the two views, and such a synthesis is not impossible.

The author appreciates the change in the outlook on the problems of the universe found in modern science from opposition to the practice of religion to an investigation into the mysteries of the universe. But the scientists themselves have expressed their helplessness in the matter of realising the truth through the application of sense-organs and scientific appliances. Man has another faculty and through the employment, after proper development of that supreme faculty, man can realise the ultimate truths in the world which do not come within the possibilities of the method adopted by the scientists. But scholars do not accept that there is any evidence of an enquiry into or realisation of that supreme reality found in the Rg Veda.

It is held that the Rg Veda, along with the other Vedas are ritualistic in character and not philosophical. The position has been taken by the author and he has ably proved that the evidences found in the Rg Veda itself are against such a view. Externally, the Rg Veda may be *Apara Vidya*, lower wisdom. But the Upanisads themselves declare that what is expounded in the Upanisads are only what are found in Rg Veda.

In the first chapter in which the problems of an *Isvara* are discussed, the nature of the gods is taken up. Their plurality, their origin and other features which deny to the gods any permanency and indicate their limitations are taken up for consideration. Then it is shown that along with such statements about the gods, there is also the current of the thought which postulates a supreme god-head in the Rg Veda. If it is said that such thoughts are later ones, then we have to distribute the same hymns into earlier and later periods in the history of the development of the literature of the Rg Veda; such passages that suggest a unity in the god-head and its supreme nature are found throughout the Rg Veda.

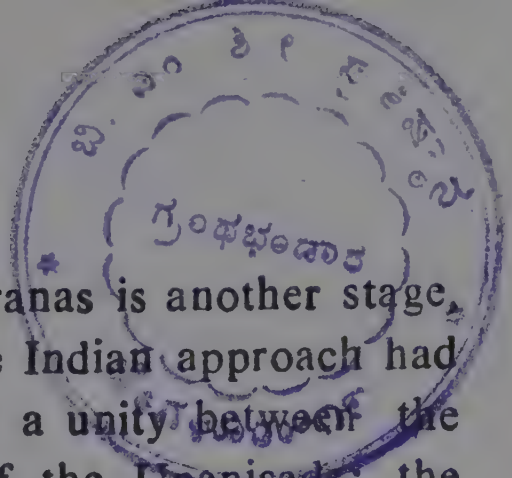
In the next chapter the relation of the cosmic law, the *Rta* the rituals and the unity of the cosmic law are taken up for detailed consideration. There cannot be a law without its application in actual life and there can be no orderly life without such a law. Thus, there is a unity between the *Rta* and the *Yajna*. Similarly, in the following chapter the unity between the worldly pursuits and the spiritual pursuits is also considered. What is called the spiritual pursuit is not opposed to the life in the world and the life in the world is not an obstacle to the attainment of the highest goal.

In the fourth chapter, there is a detailed study of the *Gayatri*. It is shown that the deity in the *Gayatri* is the supreme reality of the world. Passages are cited to prove the point. The *Gayatri* metre is also explained in the chapter, which is shown to be superior to the other metres. The *Gayatri* is the means for the realisation of the highest reality.

The modern approach to the problems of the interpretation of the Vedas is modelled on the methods pursued in science. In science there is the analytical method followed. The world is an assemblage of separate events, each different from the other and the end of science is to separate the things and show their mutual differences. If things are grouped together, it is only to present the difference of that group from another group. This is a revolt and a rebellion against the notions that prevailed in the West in an earlier age. According to such notions, there is only a unity represented by God. What is different from that is what is evil. A thing is good since that thing comes within the unitary scheme of God. The attempt has been to unify the world through an elimination of the differences. Thus, all religions tried to unify the world and unify the human race by bringing them into a single scheme of God. This was followed by the imperialists who wanted to unite humanity into a single fact through a single political power, represented by the emperor, who was the representative of God on the earth. Thus, in this attempt at eliminating differences and unifying the world in that way, there was a sort of collaboration between religion and politics.

In India, we had a different approach to the problem of the world. There is no world if differences are eliminated. The world is a world because of the assemblage of what are different. If differences are eliminated to form a unity, the world loses its real nature. But the differences are not fundamental. The differences help us in building up the essential unity. There is a unity only if there are differences. We cannot speak of the unity in what is a unity. Unity is among what are different.

The present method of study emphasises the differences and ignores the unity. Thus the Vedas and the Upanisads are placed one against the other in opposite groups. The Brahmins and the Kshatriyas are put in charge of the two groups, each in conflict with the other. Buddhism came as a contrast to this, more related to the Upanisads than to the Vedas.



The revival of the Vedic ideals in the Puranas is another stage, different from the earlier stages. But the Indian approach had been quite of another nature. There is a unity between the Karma of the Vedas and the Jnana of the Upanisads; the Upanisads represent the philosophy of the Vedas. The Puranas revive the tradition of the Vedas. Thus there is a unity between what are apparently different, as the key-stone of the traditional Indian interpretation of their ancient culture.

It is this Indian method that is followed up by Sri Chakravorthy in his work. He admits the differences; he does not shut his eyes to the difference nor does he conceal them. He cites passages to show the reality of the differences and at the same time, he shows that such differences are only a preliminary to the establishment of the essential unity among those different facts. He also cites innumerable passages which occur along with the other passages to show that there is also a unity. This unity is in the matter of the gods and also in the people, which follow a unitary law in the world. There is also a unity of purpose between worldly needs and spiritual goals. Through such citations, he also shows the unity between the various strata of the Vedic texts. He cites from them in a copious manner.

Sometimes the point is clear from the expressed meaning of the passage and sometimes the suggestions and implications have also to be taken note of. The author does both. What is contained in the Vedas is not a prosaic expression of some philosophical or ethical principles. They are expressed in literary and artistic language and such passages have to be interpreted explaining the intention behind the expression. The author does not confine himself to any particular text or to any particular types of passages. He is universal in his selections, both in the matter of the places for selections and in the matter of the types of materials that he selects.

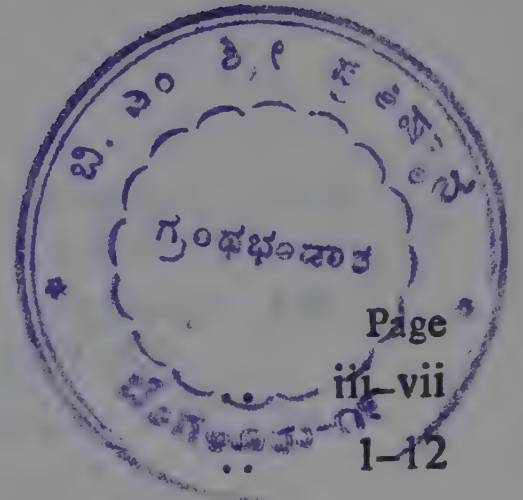
Camp: BANGALORE

15-6-1963

C. KUNHAN RAJA

Professor of Sanskrit
University of Madras.

CONTENTS



FORWARD by Dr. C. Kunhan Raja ..

INTRODUCTION

Page
iii-vii
1-12

- i. The culture and social institutions of a nation rest on its philosophical concept and religious ideal.
- ii. Three concepts: (a) Ideational eternalism, (b) Sensate temporalism and (c) Idealistic temporalism.
- iii. The concept harmonising idealism and temporalism, the best.
- iv. Insufficiency of scientific materialism.
- v. Scientific approach, analytical and fractional.
- vi. The growing nearness of modern science to metaphysical thought.
- vii. The inadequacy of scientific approach due to the insufficiency of data.
- viii. Cosmic cause described as Divine Light; confession of failure to realise it, made by even great scientists.
- ix. The seers alone can realise this transcendental Light.
- x. India peculiarly fortunate in being blessed with a long line of seers.
- xi. Their message that the realisation of the Cosmic Principle is the most blest endeavour.
- xii. The aim of the present work to prove that the Rg Veda is the original source of the message.
- xiii. The view that the Rk Samhita does not speak of One ultimate Reality.
- xiv. No monistic texts in the Rk Samhita.
- xv. The Vedic Gods are born; they do not represent a single cosmic cause.
- xvi. Western and Indian Views.
- xvii. Monistic Texts in the Rk Samhita, later interpolations.

	Page
xviii. Three stages in the development towards monism, revealed in the Rk Samhita.	1-12
xix. Monistic texts relate to the final phase of Rg Vedic development.	
xx. The traditional criticism on the worldly aim of ritualism in the Karma Kanda of the Rk Samhita.	
xxi. The Upanishadic evidence cited by these critics in support of the forgoing view.	
xxii. This view found untenable on closer examination.	
xxiii. Criticism of mere mechanical learning or mere ritual found in the Rk Samhita itself.	
xxiv. The aim of this criticism only to emphasize the ultimate good, not to discount intellectual study or ritualistic performance.	
xxv. Realisation of the ultimate reality is man's supreme end, according to the Rk Samhita.	
xxvi. To accept part of one and the same text as ancient and genuine and the rest as a later spurious interpolation is not convincing.	
xxvii. Monistic texts found in all the Mandalas of the Rk Samhita, not merely at the end.	

CHAPTER I: Iswara, Lord and Governor of the Cosmos.	13-36
--	--------------

- i. Is polytheism the central teaching of the Rg Veda?
- ii. The multiplicity and variety of Vedic Gods an indisputable fact.
- iii. The Gods and Goddesses differentiated numerically.
- iv. Differentiation according to their nature.
- v. Gods immortal by nature and acquiring immortality by their virtue.
- vi. The Gods, not self created beings.
- vii. Gods, ancient and modern.
- viii. Diverse ways in which some Gods have gained immortality.
- ix. Indra and other Gods have only regional or local supremacy.

	Page
x. No unifying and harmonising principle described in the Rk Samhita.	13-36
xi. The refutation of the foregoing view – The monistic texts of the upanishads based on Rg Vedic texts.	
xii. Illustrations for the monistic conception of reality in the Rg Veda.	
xiii. Reality is one; the Gods are mere forms, with names to match, doing diverse functions.	
xiv. Even the weapons and vehicles of the Gods are but the emblems of the glory of the Supreme Spirit.	
xv. Reality as the Cosmic Cause, as the all pervasive spirit and as the transcendental reality.	
xvi. All eulogistic epithets used by seers are but the descriptions of the same Reality.	
xvii. Different names of the Gods are functional and not factual.	
xviii. The fabric of the whole of Cosmos is but part of the ultimate principle.	
xix. Various functions performed by the Supreme Reality in different forms.	
xx. The definition of creation; the state before the act of creation.	
xxi. The spider simile.	
xxii. Creation of the Cosmos impossible without self-transfiguration by the Reality as the Cosmos; the infinite itself becomes the finite in the act of Creation.	
xxiii. The Prime Cause described by the simile of the Chariot – wheel.	
xxiv. The Supreme Spirit is the only Truth because it is the one thing that exists.	
xxv. The Supreme Spirit is the Light of all lights.	
xxvi. Reality as Time.	
xxvii. Reality as transcendental Light.	
xxviii. The self-revelation by the Supreme Being.	
xxix. The Kesins.	

	Page
xxx. The interpretations of the Mahavakya, "Ekam Sat", etc.	13-36
xxxi. The Nature and function of the Gods as manifestations of the One Reality.	
xxxii. The so-called Gods have no will, aim or function of their own ; all is the will of the Ultimate spirit.	

CHAPTER II: Cosmic Law—

(a) Rta	37-41
i. 'Rta' a term describing the ultimate Reality as the Cosmic Law or Moral Order governing the Universe.	
ii. The nature of Rta both as all-pervasive and transcendental.	
iii. The manifestation of Reality as Gods only to execute Rta.	
iv. Satya and Rta synonymous.	
v. Reality as the guardian of Rta.	
(b) Yagna	41-59
i. The aim of conformity to Rta is cosmic harmony and happiness which depend on the co-operation between Gods and Men.	
ii. The name of human and divine actions for mutual good is Yagna or Sacrifice.	
iii. Sacrifice is the bond between Earth and Heaven.	
iv. It is the very soul of Rta.	
v. Vaisvanaragni, the Preceptor, who taught the secret of sacrifice.	
vi. Sacrifice, means to the very highest good, not merely to the worldly ends.	
vii. So, Sacrifice is identified with the Cosmic principle itself.	
viii. The Universe is sprung from and upheld by sacrifice.	
ix. The whole of the Cosmos is the ground of sacrifice.	
x. The Para-Brahman as prajapati offered Himself as oblation at His own Cosmic Sacrifice.	

- xi. Creation, maintenance and upkeep of the whole universe is the sacrifice of Visvakarma.
- xii. Viskarma, the Lord of the Goddess of Speech, presiding over the Mantras of sacrifice.
- xiii. Vak, the Brahman Himself; for Vak is Truth
- xiv. Vak's manifestation of Ila, Sarasvathi and Bharati.
- xv. Vak, taking the forms of Rk, Yajus and Sama.
- xvi. Reality in male and female manifestations.
- xvii. Sakapuni and the vision of reality as it appeared before him.
- xviii. The Dual Deity in reality the ONE.
- xix. The self-division of the One into two accounted for.
- xx. Upanishadic evidence cited in support.
- xxi. The Purusha Sukta of the Rk Samhita and its account of creation.
- xxii. 'Purusha', 'Virat' and 'Vak' are all synonymous and interchangeable.
- xxiii. Rk Evidence to show that sex differentiation is not differentiation of the Highest Divinity.
- xxiv. Relation between Vak and Yagna.
- xxv. Faith in Yagna, not a blind faith, but realisation of the identity of Creator, Vak and Yagna.
- xxvi. Cosmic sacrifice is the process of creation.
- xxvii. Sacrifice the process of the creator's self-transfiguration and self evolution in many forms.
- xxviii. The individual performing sacrifice with this knowledge himself attains the dimensions of the Divine.

CHAPTER III: The End of Human Life 60-80

- i. Self-realisation or the realisation of the Lord, the highest end for man.
- ii. Material and spiritual good.

- iii. Right action essential for both.
- iv. Only holy living blessed with divine grace entitles one to the highest good.
- v. Rk evidence on this.
- vi. Faith in and conformity to the Cosmic Law ensures a life of Truth.
- vii. Retribution is certain for violation of the law.
- viii. Sin – two categories: springing from oneself and springing from external sources.
- ix. Belief in the efficacy of prayer and divine grace; but greater emphasis on self-effort.
- x. Sleep and vanity, the enemies of self-effort and self-realisation.
- xi. Stress on purity of means for the gaining of worldly goods
- xii. The gambler's confession and warning.
- xiii. Prayers for wealth, health and longevity.
- xiv. The message of fearlessness.
- xv. Worldly goods and progress mainly for the promotion of man's highest good.
- xvi. Sacrifice and social service the means to the highest self-interest.
- xvii. The married life of Pushan and Surya held up as the ideal of domestic harmony and happiness.
- xviii. The house-wife, the queen of the house; She is the home itself.
- xix. The life of a house-holder not merely for earthly happiness but for gaining the summum bonnum of life
- xx. The aim of longevity is the contemplation of the glory of Aditya.
- xxi. This vision is of two kinds; sensuous and supersensuous.
- xxii. The analogy of the tree.
- xxiii. The supreme spirit, the in-dweller in Aditya is hidden from the ordinary eye.
- xxiv. Meditation informed with discrimination and discernment, the sole means to the realisation of Iswara.

	Page
xxv. Indra alone among the Gods could recognise the Supreme being.	60-80
xxvi. True knowledge is Bliss.	
xxvii. The Kavi alone can see and give voice to the truth of all things.	
xxviii. Sayana's use of 'Kavi' and 'Deva' as synonymous terms.	
xxix. The true poet can glimpse super-sensuous truth.	
xxx. Divine grace too is essential for the realisation of the Lord.	
xxxi. The aim of the Gayathri is the attainment of the Divine grace and the highest good.	

CHAPTER IV: The Means to Man's Highest End: 81-138

- i. The Gayathri is the eulogy of Savita, who is the Supreme Lord Himself.
- ii. The view that Savita is not the Supreme Diety refuted with Internal evidence.
- iii. The One divided into four.
- iv. The Supreme is one before creation, multiple after creation
- v. Pushan, Varuna and Aditya are all identical
- vi. The glory of Aditya described in the upanishads can only be the description of the supreme Being.
- vii. The excellence of the Gayathri over other metres.
- viii. Syena and Gayathri considered identical.
- ix. Sayana's view.
- x. Agni, Gayathri and Syena are different names of the same Being
- xi. Soma is but Aditya's energy.
- xii. Aditya, Hiranyagarbha and Vak identified.
- xiii. Rk evidence on this view.
- xiv. How can Gayathri, the means to Karma be the means to the knowledge of the Brahman?

	Page
xv. Is Gayathri only a means to the knowledge of the Supreme or is it Supreme Knowledge itself?	81-138
xvi. The significance of the feet of Gayathri.	
xvii. Gayathri, the purifier of all sins.	
xviii. The Supreme Being who is beyond all can be realised only through a mantra which is greater than all mantras.	
xix. Identification of Pranava (the sacred symbol Om), Gayathri and the transcendental Light.	
xx. The parts of the Pranava.	
xxi. The unmanifest Cosmos became manifest through the utterances of the Pranava.	
xxii. Pranava is the Brahman.	
xxiii. The Bow & Arrow simile.	
xxiv. The efficacy of Gayathri.	
xxv. He who contemplates the Gayathri becomes One with the Supreme.	
xxvi. The Gayathri Interpreted.	
xxvii. Conclusion.	
NOTES	1-39
INDEX	i-x



INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

1

The culture and the social institutions of every nation or race depend upon the philosophical wisdom of its seers and sages who are its guides and leaders, vitalised and nourished by its religious and moral ideals.¹ Broadly speaking, historians have classified philosophical concepts and beliefs into three different categories:²

(1) Iswara (Lit. Lord *i.e.* of the universe), who is eternal, is the sole Reality. The temporal and phenomenal world, though not un-real, is yet not of primary importance.

(2) The universe is a continuous stream of phenomena. There is no Reality apart from, and other than, these phenomena. The only real thing, the only matter of any consequence is life in this world – life here and now.

(3) Though itself a passing thing, the temporal and phenomenal world springs from the eternal Iswara, the Lord and Ruler of all. Hence the world too is real and important just because it is pervaded, through and through, by Iswara, the eternal Reality. All things in the world that strive towards perfection seek to attain their object through the knowledge of, and through conformity to, the will of the eternal Iswara and His purposes.

The first of these views totally ignored the world and worldly existence. The second does not hold up any lofty ideal of lasting value, that would chasten and exalt man, any ideal that would be worth living and striving for, any ideal that is fit to be pursued and fit to be gained. Thus both the first and the second views are defective and unsatisfactory.

Earthly life must be perfected by seeking to realise the eternal Reality and by following its purposes and its ways. Reconciliation of the temporal with the eternal, of the passing with the lasting, of the relative with the absolute – only this faith and this endeavour, firmly held and constantly practised,

is the proper self-culture. This is the view of the great historians. And many eminent scientists of today have also been expressing a more or less similar view in recent times.³

The present age, which it is almost superfluous to describe as the age of science, is perhaps the most dynamic and momentous period in the history of mankind. By the help of aids and appliances, which were not available to our ancestors, modern scientists have the facility of exploring many fields which had for ages been mysterious and baffling to man. Modern scientists carry on their investigations, making continual use of the vast stores of knowledge which have accumulated from time immemorial. Especially during the present century, science has an increasing tendency to free itself from the materialistic obsession which characterized it in the last century. Professor Albert Einstein truly observes, "In the present age, tainted by the spirit of materialism, only the scientists, who investigate the secrets of the universe with complete dispassion and pure detachment, are true devotees of religion."

There was a time, not very long ago, when the pursuit and practice of religion was impeded and hindered by a good many scientists. Science then paid attention to the investigation of only practical things which were perceptible to and could be verified by the evidence of the senses. Owing to this self-limitation, science was then powerless to seek the realisation of man's supreme and ultimate ideal. Scientists were able to unravel many mysteries from the secrets of the atom to the nature and destiny of stellar systems lying beyond millions of light-years. Thus they were able to shed the light of knowledge on the whole world. Yet, in the process of their investigation, they divided the universe, for inevitable practical reasons, into several distinct fields of study and tried to discover the truths in each field individually and separately. For this very reason they were not able to discover that principle of harmony which reconciles all apparent contradictions and discloses the central unity that lies under all the complexity and diversity of the universe. Much less could they – even if they had tried to do

so – attain to that other harmony which stills all the turmoils of life and smoothen out all its difficulties, and which is able to confer upon us blessings of peace.

But in recent times there has been a welcome change in the attitude of scientists. Some of the most eminent scientists of today have touched the very frontiers of a world which is admitted on all hands to be peculiar province of religion and philosophy⁴ – a world which is beyond the physical world explored by science and hence designated the metaphysical world. Many fundamental discoveries made in recent decades in physical science lend increasing support to the belief that there is a basic unity in nature. Another variant of this belief which has been gaining sway over scientists' minds is that the whole universe sprang from a single primary cause and that it is only this primary 'substance' which is eternal and undying.⁵

Some hold the view that this very primary principle which Professor Einstein has called the "world stuff" must be both the material cause and the instrumental or efficient cause of the universe.⁶ Others go further and believe that this fundamental stuff of the universe must be a conscious principle;⁷ that, in other words, it is more a spirit than a mere stuff. However, one thing is certain that the subject of inquiry here is that original and basic principle which is the very cause of all existence and through the pursuit of which man can gain his highest ideal and realise the very *raison d'être* of his own existence. But in this investigation, which is beyond doubt the most important of all investigations ever made by man, there are certain difficulties and drawbacks which are intrinsic to the very method of scientific investigation. For, in its very nature, scientific inquiry has not, and cannot have, at its disposal those peculiar and special ingredients and techniques that are indispensable to the realisation of Supreme Reality.

That knowledge which springs from and rests on the realisation of the unity underlying the diversity of the universe harmonises all apparent discords and contradictions. The beauty that is engendered by and reveals the regularity and

rhythm of the universe is an aspect of this harmony. Religion seeks to establish this truth and this beauty in an enduring manner. The realisation of these ideals leads man to a blessed state. The aim of man's life is to attain to this blessed state. All this is admitted by a great many thinkers. If this belief is correct, it follows that the motive force of the blessed state which is sought after can be nothing less than Supreme Reality itself. This Reality must be a conscious principle and must have a purpose. It must be of the nature of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. This cosmic principle must be the ultimate and primary cause of this entire universe of sentient and non-sentient beings. And it must be all-embracing and without end. Certain philosophers like Plotinus worshipped this cosmic principle as a celestial Light.⁸ Realisation of this divine light is not possible through the medium of the senses or with the aid of scientific appliances which assist only sensual perception.⁹ The very greatest of scientists, though they may be gifted with great genius and they may have the genuine aspiration to understand the nature of cosmic reality, have confessed to a certain helplessness in the matter. They describe the nature and cause of the universe in terms of such formulae as the Principle of Indeterminacy, and they prefer to style themselves agnostics.¹⁰ Thus, in their admission, it can be seen that a longing to know the supreme reality and a feeling of inability to fulfil this longing are simultaneously revealed.

If it is realised that the achievement of spiritual bliss through self-realisation is the ultimate end of human life, it will also be realised that such self-realisation is not possible without the knowledge of the Supreme Reality.¹¹ To know all truths but not to know the one Truth that will lead to the state of bliss and blessedness is but piece-meal and partial knowledge, and it is of no avail whatsoever.¹² The attainment of knowledge that is true, entire and wholesome is possible only through super-sensuous inner vision, born of deep and tranquil meditation, which is altogether beyond the power of mere intellect.¹³ Only those great seers who, through the discipline

of meditation and penance which is made possible by absolute self-restraint and complete conquest of the senses, are purified and are, therefore, able to gain access to the Supreme Reality are fit to realise the Light Divine.

India has had the good fortune of giving birth to, and possessing even in our day, a good many such sages and seers. "No nation in the whole world can forget the great Truth taught at the very dawn of history by India's wisest seers – the Supreme Truth enshrined in the Vedas and Upanishads. The acute minds of these seers, who were unrestingly immersed in philosophical quest broke through the darkness of ignorance and always engaged in entering into divine illumination. The pursuit of Supreme Reality, variously called the Atman, the Paramatman or the Brahman is the summum bonum of life – this, in brief, is their teaching".¹⁴ Unless man's loftiest aspirations are the attainment of the knowledge of fundamental Reality, the realisation of Cosmic Truth and the adoration of Cosmic Beauty, mankind has no salvation either individually or collectively. Such is their definite and unmistakable view.

If it is granted that the pursuit of Cosmic harmony, through the knowledge of fundamental cosmic reality, is the highest good to be attained by the world, the question is – what is the source that inculcates this knowledge? Is it the Vedas or the Vedanta? This controversy has, in our days become rather animated, if not acrimonious. The object of the present work is to show that the earliest of the Vedas, namely the Rg Veda Samhita is the basic source of every kind of description of Supreme Reality embodied either in the Upanishads or in the Bhagavad-Gita.

That knowledge which imparts instruction as to the nature of Supreme Reality, which is the mainspring and motive force of cosmic harmony, is what has been termed spiritual or metaphysical knowledge. That action alone is the right action, which is instrumental to and which promotes the quest and

attainment of Supreme Reality. There is a two-fold objection raised in order to show the alleged imperfection, or to put it more mildly, the limitation of the Rk Samhita. It is averred that the Rk Samhita teaches little or nothing about ultimate Reality. Much less does it indicate that type of right action which is the means to the realisation of this Reality. It is further alleged that statements formulating the nature of Supreme Reality are not at all found in the Rg Veda. Or, if there are such statements anywhere, they are but spurious interpolations. This view is expressed not only by a large number of modern foreign scholars, but something like this view has come down through the ages even in Indian tradition. When the great Raja Ram Mohan Roy paid a visit to the British Museum, he found the great Vedic scholar, Dr. Rosen striving hard to publish the Rk Samhita. Seeing this, Raja Ram Mohan Roy is reported to have expressed his pained surprise that such an eminent savant should be frittering away all his time and energies over such a futile task.

All the Upanishads abound with famous statements which emphatically postulate a Brahman or a primary and ultimate Reality, the author and regulator of all the universe. ईशावस्यमिदं सर्वम् All this (vast Universe) is the abode of the Lord; अयमात्मा ब्रह्म – this Atman (the individual soul) is (verily) the Brahman (the Supreme Soul); सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म – all this (infinite universe) is indeed the Brahman (and nothing else). Such instances can be multiplied. Statements of this kind are not found in the Rk Samhita. The hymns of the Rk Samhita do not speak of a Brahman who is all this universe and more. Agni and the other deities of the Rk Samhita do not represent any Supreme Reality. All these deities are themselves mere creatures. Indra, Agni and the Maruts are all born of fathers and mothers. They at best represent a fragment of Cosmic Reality. No deity which may be regarded as the Supreme and Perfect Principle is praised anywhere in the Rk Samhita. This is the burden and import of the criticism against the Rk Samhita, indicated above.

Among modern scholars, certain western Vedic scholars like the great Professor Max Muller are the originators of this line of thinking. There are a good few Indian scholars too who agree with and subscribe to this view. The Rk Samhita has sometimes been jocularly described by scholars of this sort as a God-making factory.¹⁵ It is asserted that the Rishis of the Rg Veda, each according to his individual genius, personified the forces of Nature and worshipped these personifications as deities. This worship was largely a certain propitiation or even appeasement of these so-called deities, prompted by self-interest and calculated to obtain personal boons. Hence this adoration of Nature gods and goddesses was far indeed from the disinterested pursuit of the Para Brahman, the ultimate and Supreme Reality, enjoined upon us in the Upanishads. Such monistic statements as are scattered here and there in the Rk Samhita are to be regarded without exception as interpolations of a later day. Such statements belong to the last and closing period of the Vedas, to the final phase in this process of God-making.

This view sees in the statements of the Rk Samhita three distinct stages of evolution in the comprehension of Cosmic Reality by the Vedic seers:¹⁶

(i) a certain polytheism, reflecting the adoration of the personified forces of Nature;

(ii) a monotheism, seeking to reveal the unity which is supposed to under-lie the diversity of the Gods; and

(iii) a monism, which is the genuine discovery of the oneness of eternal Reality.

Thus, it is claimed, there is a certain gradualness, a natural passing from a lower to the higher type of understanding, in this development of Rg Vedic philosophy. This school of thought is, therefore, quite definite in its view that, in the early or the middle period of the composition of the Rg Vedic hymns, there is not the least trace of any monism in the attitude towards Reality of the Rg Vedic Rishis, that all

monistic passage in these hymns relate only to the culminating period in the composition of the Rg Veda.

There is yet another criticism against all the Vedas in general, and hence relating to the Rg Veda too. According to this criticism, all the Vedas are only ritualistic in character. Therefore all the statements embodied in the Vedas are merely figurative; they are not sober descriptions of factual reality; and they ordain a low, self-seeking endeavour. It may be conceded that even such a personal and self-interested endeavour, in so far as it is spiritual in its nature, may bring benefits. But such benefits cannot be lasting. Moreover, in order to experience these benefits, their gainer has inevitably to be involved in the recurring cycle of births and deaths. Sacrificial rituals cannot promote spiritual improvement or self-realisation. They divert attention from things of perennial value towards the pursuit and attainment of the objects of sensual enjoyment. These Vedic passages which commend material pleasures impose a singleminded effort prompted by the low motive of personal gain. Hence they are utterly unable to lead to Brahma-Santi, 'Peace-in-the-Brahman', that is to say, the perfect and eternal peace to be gained through communion (or union) with the Brahman. Those that repose their hope in Ishta-purtas or self-seeking sacrifices and do not believe in any other method as salutary are but foolish persons in as much as they exhaust their punya or merit in the (lesser) heavens and are finally obliged to return to this moral world. Such, in brief, is the indictment of the ritualism of the Vedas made not only in our day but right down the ages.¹⁷

It will thus be observed that burden of all the foregoing criticism is that the Rk Samhita (and even the other Vedas) does not posit any eternal Reality, much less does it ordain the realisation of such Reality; that neither the rites nor any other modes of worship prescribed in the Rk Samhita are conducive to the attainment of the highest spiritual bliss through the true knowledge of the ultimate Reality.

In reply to this criticism it is herein urged that the view on which it is based is not borne out by the evidence of the Rg Vedic text and hence the criticism is invalid, being founded on un-acceptable evidence.

Critics who are unwilling to allow that the Rg Veda embodies the highest knowledge try to prove their view-point on the authority of certain passages taken from the Upanishads themselves. They point out, for instance, that the Mundaka, as also certain other Upanishads, include the Rg Veda among other types of Apra Vidyas or lesser, secular knowledge. The Chandogya says that Narada knew all the Vedas, all the arts and all the sciences. But he had no knowledge of the Atman, self-knowledge, which alone is the highest knowledge. And so Narada came to Sanat Kumara, seeking instruction in and initiation into the knowledge of the highest Reality.¹⁸ The Katha Upanishad declares that the realisation of the omnipresent, all-pervasive Supreme Soul is not possible through mere learning or instruction.¹⁹ A good many Vedic scholars quote such Upanishadic passages in support of their view that the Vedas, including the Rg Veda, do not embody the highest type of Philosophical inquiry. Just because such critics seem to have the un-assailable evidence of the Vedanta itself on their side, it may appear on a superficial examination that their view is, *prima facie*, perfectly sound and proper. But, upon closer examination, it will be evident that the import of the Upanishadic passages, cited by such critics, is quite different from what is made out by them.

It is not denied here that the Rg Veda and the other Vedas are Apra Vidyas or lesser types of knowledge. One need not go to the Upanishads to discover this. The Rg Veda itself admits this limitation quite clearly. There are many passages in the Rk Samhita which state that the Rg Veda is not only Apra Vidya or a lesser knowledge but that it is, in the ultimate analysis, even futile. As long as the study of the Vedas does not lead to and culminate in the realisation of Brahman, it is of no avail whatsoever. To depend wholly on the study of the

Vedas or on the performance of Vedic rites is to forget the very aim by assiduously clinging to the means. "What is the use of chanting hymns, without knowing the Para-Brahman?" asks the Rk Samhita in such passages as यस्तन्नवेद किमृचा करिष्यति ²⁰ – Of what use is the Rk or (chanting of) the hymn to him, who does not know that? What is the use, it is again asked, of reciting the Vedas without knowing the Para-Brahman, the Dweller in the highest heavens and the One who is named the Imperishable?

To him who studies the Vedas without comprehending their significance or purpose, such study is but a wearisome drudgery. Such a fellow is a mere dunce who is content to carry a useless load. But he who makes a meaningful study of the Vedas will gain all kinds of lasting good. Perfect knowledge will eradicate all the shortcomings of the aspirant. But meaningless repetition of any text or formula is mere wordy snare. An un-understanding spirit cannot gain any illumination even as the driest fuel cannot blaze out in an extinguished fire.²¹ So declare the authors of the Nirukta, and the view of the Rg Veda is just the same.

Since unintelligent study of the Vedas fails to bear the very fruit for which it is intended,²² the man who makes such study may have eyes, but he is blind. Since hearing Vedic texts without comprehending their import is but fruitless endeavour, he who thus hears them has ears indeed, yet he is deaf. But he who understands the significance and realises the purpose of the Vedas derives celestial bliss and eternal beatitude. Such a man is held in high esteem in learned congregations. The very gods honour such a person. No one can vanquish him in debates. But the mechanical learner loses himself in a mesh of words which can neither put forth any flowers nor bear any fruit. He bears the burden of futile learning and wanders about aimlessly among the really learned.²³ To be truly intelligent and wise, one must possess the discrimination to know what is conducive to self-realisation. One must have the subtle sense to realise the Supreme Reality. It is pointless to skim the surface without entering into the heart of things. Mastery of more

words is but tedious labour. Study without comprehension or realisation and empty repetition of words will not help one to approach the Para-Brahman or eternal Reality.

Such is the warning repeatedly sounded in the Vedas and the Upanishads. But the intention of all this warning is neither to discount the study of the Vedas nor to underrate the performance of Vedic rites but to emphasise the truth that, in order to realise the Para-Brahman, a far better means is needed than the mere learning of the Vedas or the performance of ritual. It is, however, not right to infer from these warnings that the Rg Vedic texts do not speak of Supreme Reality and do not indicate the method to realise it. On the contrary, the Upanishads have been designated the Vedanta just because the Vedas themselves are the source of the Upanishadic description of ultimate Reality and of the mode towards its realisation. The Mundaka text, which declares that it is only those who have the clear, definite and correct understanding of the highest knowledge of the Vedanta that can gain immortality, bears out this truth.²⁴ The Kena Upanishad asserts that the Vedas themselves are the base of the Upanishads and that all the Upanishads rest on the foundation of the highest Reality taught in the Vedas. The Chandogya view of the matter is that the Vedas are the food of immortality and that the Upanishads are the very essence of this food. Thus the Upanishads themselves bear unmistakable testimony to the fact it is the Vedas that are the source and fountain-head of their understanding and description of Supreme Reality. Hence all the Vedic and Upanishadic criticisms levelled against mechanical study and formal performance of ritual are only intended to pin-point the warning that the main purpose of such endeavour should not be lost sight of.²⁵

Knowledge and realisation of Supreme Reality is the final end of man's endeavour. The pursuit of Vedic lore and the observance of the rites enjoined therein are the means. That is the sum and substance of all the Vedic and Upanishadic warnings cited above. That, too, is the essence of such passages as
य इत्तद्विदुस्त इमे समासते

It does not stand to reason to say that all the monistic passages of the Rk Samhita are either the compositions of a later date or mere interpolations. For, if all non-dualistic passages should be regarded as of later composition or insertion, it will mean that every Mandala, every Adhyaya and even every Sukta should be divided into earlier and later text, which is not only a subjective and arbitrary judgement but which would reduce interpretation to a mere absurdity.²⁶ But it is an unmistakable fact that non-dualistic description of Supreme Reality is found throughout the Rk Samhita, from the first Mandala to the last. Thus in the first Mandala we have—सूर्य आत्मा जगत्स्तस्थुषश्च and एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति. In the third Mandala there occurs the text—सह देवानामसुरत्वमेकम्. In the fourth we have—अहं मनुः etc. The fifth contains the verse—यादृगेव ददृशे etc. The sixth Mandala has the following verse—रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव. The eighth Mandala contains the verse—एकं विबभूव सर्वम्. And in the tenth we come across the verse—एकं सन्तं बहुधा कल्पयन्ति. Thus, from first to last, the Rk Samhita is replete with monistic texts. Hence, if the distinguishing merit of the Upanishads is their non-dualistic description of ultimate Reality, it is the very texts of Rk the Samhita that are the basis of the Upanishadic description. Wherever in the Upanishads there is a non-dualistic description of or reference to ultimate Reality, the Upanishads seek to establish the soundness of that description or reference by citing in their support hymns of the Rk Samhita in these words: तदेतद्व्याभ्युक्तम्. This has been excellently stated in the Rk Samhita.²⁷

It may, therefore, be concluded that there is nothing in the Upanishads which is not stated in the Rk Samhita, whether it is the postulation and description of ultimate Reality or the mode of its attainment or the realisation of cosmic harmony which is the fruit of this attainment. The Rg Vedic texts themselves express in brief the views which are expounded in detail in the Upanishads.

CHAPTER I

Iswara, Lord and Governor of the Cosmos

It has been already indicated that, among certain Vedic scholars, there is a view that in the Rk Samhita there is none of that spiritual brooding or that supreme quest for the highest Reality which is characteristic of the Upanishads. It is alleged that in the Rg Vedic hymns there is not the slightest evidence of even the awareness of an ultimate, unifying principle which is the root cause and motive force of cosmic harmony. Consequently, it is maintained, any search after, and any aspiration to realise, an ultimate Reality is wholly absent in the Rk Samhita. The basis of this view is the multiplicity and variety of the gods of the Rg Veda, who are described as possessing a status and a destiny, each distinct from the others. The question to be considered is this: Does this description of the plurality of the gods mean that the Rg Vedic view of ultimate Reality itself is pluralistic? In other words, is the plurality and diversity of these gods regarded in the Rg Veda as the absolute reality; or, is it a mode of description necessitated by linguistic convenience; or, is it the description of the many and varied attributes and functions of a single, ultimate Reality which is both the cause and the controller of the whole universe?

Before attempting to answer this question, it would seem desirable first to state in full what may be called the Plurality view of the gods of the Rg Veda. For one thing, such a statement would seem necessary from the standpoint of fairness to those who hold a different view. What is more, what, to our conviction, seems to be the truth of the matter can then be stated so as to enable critical readers to make a comparative evaluation and judge the truth for themselves.

It is an indisputable fact that the gods, who are praised and propitiated in the Rk Samhita and who are described as having, each of them, an individual form and a status quite distinct from that of the rest, are almost infinite in number.

On the evidence of the Rg Vedic hymns these numerous gods may be classified into – (i) those who dwell in Dyu-loka or the higher heavens; (ii) those whose abode is Antariksha or the lower heavens; and (iii) those who dwell on the earth. The multiplicity of the gods and the classification of the gods are described as follows:

“O ye Asvins, come ye to us in conjunction with the thirty-three gods in order to accept of us the proffered Soma drink.”¹

“O thou Agni, come thou to our sacrifice, attended by the thirty-three gods.”²

“Of these thirty-three gods, eleven are dwellers of the highest heavens (Dyu-loka), eleven dwell in the lower heavens (Antariksha), and the other eleven belong to the earth.”³

“The gods who number three hundred, those who are three thousand, and those whose number is thirty-three have all offered their worship to Agni.”⁴

“O thou Agni, come thou to our sacrifice and bring with thee all the other gods and their divine spouses.”⁵

Such statements describe not only the plurality of the gods but divide them and their divine spouses into different classes.

Again, we come upon statements like – – “We make our obeisance to all the different kinds of gods: to those that have the highest qualities and those that have less perfect qualities; to those that are young and those that are old.”⁶ Is not this statement perfectly clear that, among the Rg Vedic gods, there are differences of form as well as of attributes? Indeed, are not the gods differentiated even in respect of age? What more would you need to prove the plurality view? Such would no doubt be the triumphant question the protagonists of the plurality theory would ask.

And then, evidence for the plurality theory seems to mount up. The Rg Vedic gods are classified on yet another principle. Those gods that are born divine and have a divine form are called

Ajana Devas and those that attain divinity through their meritorious actions are called Karma Devas. (*Vaj Samhita* 31-17).

There is another fact to be taken into account in this connection. The gods (of the *Rk Samhita*) are no doubt praised as immortals. But they are not known as self-created or self-born beings (*Svayambhus*). On the contrary, they too are created beings or creatures. Their birth is due to an external cause. Even like human beings and other mortals, the gods have fathers and mothers.⁷ The progenitors of the gods are referred to in statements like the following—

“The goddess Ushas, (Dawn) who bears the alternative appellation of Aditi, is the mother and creator of all the gods.”⁸

“Brahmanaspati is the father of the gods.”⁹

The state and status of the gods seem to be reduced to a level lesser than the highest by still another consideration. Certain things existed in the universe much earlier than all these gods. Evidently, these things had been created long before the gods. “Some herbs (*Oshadhis*) had been created full three yugas before the gods,”¹⁰ says one of the hymns. Another declares, “The creation of the universe is of far more ancient date than that of the gods. Hence the gods themselves do not know the secret of universal creation.”¹¹

Among the gods themselves some are described as ancient and others as beings of a later date. Some are dispensers of boons and others are spoken of as their dependents. Those among them attain immortality in due course by the performance of meritorious deeds, just as they have attained divinity itself by performing exceptionally meritorious deeds through the exercise of special powers and uncommon talents. In other words, immortality is not an attribute belonging to their very nature; it is not native to them. It is rather a state and status to be gained by them, even though they are gods. And the means to immortality or the mode of attaining it is not different as between gods and men. Gods or men, both have

to perform deeds of merit, and have to persist in performing them, until eventually they achieve immortality. If gods are not subject to death, that is not due to any inherent virtue of theirs, deathlessness is not part of their nature. The deathless state is subject to karma or the law of Action; or to the grace of some other deity, which itself is subject to the law of Karma. A hymn says, "Savitr confers immortality upon the gods."¹² Another hymn says, "Immortality is attainable by the gods through the drinking of Soma."¹³ Another statement records that "by the performance of penance the gods attained an exalted position and status."¹⁴ Such statements establish beyond doubt the fact that the supremacy and greatness of the gods are not determined by their nature but are subject to their Karma or their doings. Divinity and immortality are determined by the law of causation.

From the foregoing description three facts emerge – that the number of the gods is almost infinite; that they are all subject to the law of Karma; and that their exalted and glorious status and their great might do not spring from their nature but from the accumulated merit acquired through a long record of noble deeds. It is arguable that, in such a dispensation, it is improbable that there can be a philosophical concept of a single cosmic principle, all-penetrating and omnipresent (*sarvagata*), all-pervasive (*sarva-vyapi*) and all-controlling (*sarvantaryami*), which is the ultimate cause and governing principle of the whole universe. Indra and other gods have sovereignty only over their own worlds. This means that the worlds of the gods are many and distinct and that the lords of these worlds too are distinct individuals. Thus Agni is the lord of the earth, Vayu is the lord of the lower heavens and Aditya is the lord of the higher heavens. There is no unifying, no harmonising principle that reconciles the differences between the numerous gods or between the multiplicity of their worlds. The hymns of the Rk Samhita, it may be contended, do not say that the entire universe, consisting alike of moving and non-moving things (*chara* and *achara*), has one single cause. Nor do they

say that everything will finally dissolve into one ultimate eternal principle.

Evidences in support of such contentions seem only too many; the whole of the Rg Veda seems to be replete with such evidences. Vedic scholars who put forward such arguments are eminent persons and their views are entitled to the highest consideration and respect. It would be a temerity – almost amounting to audacity – to counter the views of such eminent scholars. Yet, with due deference to these distinguished scholars, it must be stated that they have reached an erroneous conclusion regarding the nature of the ultimate Reality revealed and described in the Rk Samhita. And the error in this matter is due to a tendency to take – or mistake – the superficial appearance for the underlying reality.

It is a universally recognised fact that the Upanishads abound in texts which postulate a single, all-embracing cosmic principle that reconciles all differences. In other words, the texts of the Upanishads generally embody a monistic concept that discovers a unity in the midst of and behind all apparent diversity. Those that make a careful study of the Upanishads can hardly fail to notice the fact that it is the statements of the Rk Samhita that are largely cited in support of this monistic concept.¹⁵

Again, it is a well known fact that Bhagavan Shankaracharya stated his advaitic or monistic doctrine in his famous formula; **नेश्वरादन्यः संसारी** – “There is none other than the Lord (Iswara) Himself who is bound by Samsara. This Iswara, the single ultimate, eternal reality behind all this universe of change is none other than the single, eternal principle postulated in the Rg Veda (and the other Vedas) under many and varied appellations such as Surya, Atman, Indra, Visva Karma, Prajapati, Agni, Savitr and so on. A careful and deep observation of the Rk Samhita makes this abundantly clear. **सूर्य आत्मा जगत्तस्थुषश्च** – Surya is the soul of the universe, its support and stay. This is one of the most important texts

of the Rk Samhita. The other gods of the Samhita too are the very cosmic principle described in the mantra cited here. Their different names stand for the different aspects of the glory and power of the same single cosmic principle. The various gods described in different places are not so many different individuals, but diverse aspects of the same ultimate reality. The several aspects are distinguished only in order to emphasise the different functions performed by this single ultimate principle. In other words, the various and different gods are neither various nor different; they are no more than functional appellations of one and the same fundamental reality. Three or thirty-three or three thousand are numbers to which it would be erroneous to attach a literal or absolute significance. They are rather to be understood as modes of speech which practical considerations of making the meaning clear or of bringing home a certain truth made the composers of the hymns adopt.¹⁶

The nature of the ultimate reality unfolded and described in the hymns of the Rk Samhita is clarified beyond doubt by the authors of Brhaddevata and Nirukta. The author of the Brhaddevata says, "There is but one deity. This deity has great powers like Anima, the power of self-contraction into atomic magnitude. And by its special powers it can assume many diverse forms. Hence this primary principle which is the one single soul of the whole universe is described and praised under different names. Those who are praised as several and different gods are all part and parcel of this Supreme Soul, Parama Atman.¹⁷ All those who are praised as different individual gods interchange their forms." Such is the comment made by the Brhaddevata, explaining how a single Supreme Reality can manifest itself in many forms.

The Brhaddevata goes on to say, "The Sun (Surya) is the sole cause of all this universe of time—present, past and future—, of its sentient and moving condition as well as of its insentient and non-moving condition. And Surya is also the cause of the dissolution of the universe.¹⁸ It is Surya himself that is sometimes described as Prajapati, the lord of all

creatures. Prajapati is the root cause of Asat, the un-manifest state of the universe, and of Sat, its manifest state. In other words, the universe emerges from and immerges into Prajapati; its emergence is evolution and its immergene is involution. Prajapati is none other than the indestructible principle, (Para) Brahman."¹⁹

The comment continues, "Surya, who himself appears as Prajapati, divides himself into three and parvasively abides in all the worlds. He holds all the gods in his beams."²⁰

He whom the Rshis or the seers adore and praise in the hymns of the Vedas and the chants of the Saman is Surya or Prajapati himself. It is the might and glory of this supreme principle, existing in three forms, that expresses itself in different kinds of power and influence. And it is the supreme principle in its exercise of different kinds of power and influence that is designated as the various gods under several names.²¹ Thus the well-known names of the gods are but indications of a certain division of positions and functions belonging to the supreme principle itself in different circumstances. The three forms of the supreme soul are described as if they were three different deities, but they are really one. That is why there is no difference, either of kind or of degree, in the devotional attitude with which they are praised in the hymns. Mention of different weapons and vehicles is another thing likely to give the impression that the gods to whom they belong are so many distinct individuals. But these so-called weapons and vehicles are only external symbols of the might and glory of the apparently different gods who, in reality, are the single supreme spirit.²² Thus is explained the fact of cosmic unity in the Brhaddevata and Nirukta commentaries. There is no other supreme or absolute reality than the one that is described in the Upanishads as "the Light of all luminaries." All the gods like Indra and all the radiant spheres like Aditya are only emanations of a part of this supreme Light. This is the definite and indisputable view of the Rk Samhita regarding the ultimate reality of the universe.²³

To illustrate the view stated above from the Rk Samhita itself; One hymn says, "Twashta, whose form is the cosmos, who is the inspiring motive force of all, who has different names like Visva-Karma (Creator of the universe), created all creatures. He gives forms and names to all of them. The entire universe of moving and non-moving things belong to him. All the worlds are his."²⁴

Another hymn says, "O Prajapati, there is no one but thee who surrounds and envelops this entire universe. Thou alone art all the cosmos. And thou too art the spirit transcending all the cosmos."²⁵

A third hymn runs, "One single supreme principle holds sole sway over the entire universe of moving and non-moving things, which is at once eternal and evanescent."²⁶

Yet another hymn says, "There is only one person who is the Lord of all, and He is Himself the cosmos. Whatever form He assumes, He has a name that symbolises and describes it."²⁷

The gods who are diverse forms of this supreme spirit confer upon the world different kinds of boons, each according to his nature, position and function. That Indra and all other names are only the names of the same supreme spirit is clearly stated in a hymn thus: "The poets, who are the seers and the knowing persons describe in words the same reality in many images." (X. 114.5).

Endowed with transcendental vision, the Rshis describe the same supreme soul, the same single principle in many ways in their songs of praise. Pita (Father), Janita (Progenitor), Vidhata (Maker and Regulator of all destinies) are some among the many attributes used to indicate the functions performed by the supreme power, which are beneficial to the world.²⁸ Other attributes describe the all pervasive and in-dwelling nature of the supreme spirit which governs and directs all from within.²⁹

The Rk says, "This (Person) (translator) is Hamsa (lit. the Goer; from 'hanti' : goes). He dwells in the skies as Aditya and, for this reason, he is named Suchishat. As Vasu he pervades all in the form of Vayu and belongs to the lower heavens; he is, therefore, called Antarikshasat. He is in the Vedi or the sacrificial altar as Agni; hence he is Vedishat. Among men he appears as a guest; and so he is Duronasat; or, alternatively, Nrshat. As he is in the exalted gods, he is Varasat. He is the essence of Truth and abides in Yajna or sacrifice; therefore, he is Rtasat. In water he takes birth as the oyster or crocodile or as some other water creature; so he is Abja. On earth he springs in the form of paddy, ragi or other crops; he is, therefore, named Goja. On the mountains he is born as rivers or streams or springs; so he is Adrija. And, although he lives in all these diverse forms, since he preserves his real, original form, he is wellknown as Rta. And, above all, since he is greater than all other great things, he is Brhat.³⁰

Thus it is the various powers of Prajapati that appear as different gods such as Indra. Or, put it in another way, the Rshis who possess divine vision give different names to the same reality in conformity with their own powers of realisation and the degree of their knowledge of that reality. In any case, the multiplicity and variety of the gods is only a mode of description necessitated by the practical limitations of language; it is not the absolute truth of the matter.

The Rks say, "They call the same single Aditya by several names like Indra, Mitra, Varuna or Agni. He alone is the divine soul. He is the Garutman who soars, sublime, over all. The Rshis who have a keen understanding describe the one supreme soul as Agni, Yama, Matarisvan."³¹

"Those gods that created the earth and heaven are not themselves the highest powers. There is a spirit far higher than all of them. This supreme spirit, Hiranyagarbha, the primal cause of the whole universe is the highest power. This

spirit supports earth and heaven and all the gods and sustains and protects them.³²

The entire universe is woven like the warf and the woof of a fabric into the very being of this primal spirit.

“Surya is the soul of the universe, its stay and support.”³³ This is a formula by which the Rg Vedic hymn describes the central principle which co-ordinates and unifies all things. The same principle is compared to a spider. And the universe created, sustained and dissolved by this spirit is compared to the web woven by a spider. As a spider throws out of itself its gossamer strings, weaves a delicate and lovely web out of them and finally withdraws it all into itself, even so does the Primal spirit called Prajapati brings out of his own being this entire universe and he dissolves it all in himself. The creation of the universe is a process of evolution and its dissolution is a process of involution. The universe evolves out of the supreme spirit and finally it enters again into the supreme spirit. It is just because Prajapati himself swallows up the universe which he himself creates and sustains that the attribute ‘Aditi’ is used to proclaim his might and glory.³⁴ The hymns say, “This Aditi itself is Dyuloka or the higher heavens. It is also Antariksha or the lower heavens. Aditi is the creative principle who gives birth to the whole universe.³⁵ She contains in her own form the Panchajanas including the gods who are the protectors of the world (loka palas).”³⁶

In the universe created by him, this supreme spirit himself burns like Agni and shines like Aditya. He himself is Parjanya and he is Vayu too. The Rk says, “He is Sat and Asat. He is at once the male that procreates and the female that bears and gives birth (to all).”³⁷ “The immaterial spirit called the Brahman creates the whole universe which is material. It is the causal principle which itself assumes the form of the universe, which is the effect.”³⁸

‘Creation’ is not making any new thing that did not previously exist. It merely means the fact and process of the

supreme creative principle transforming itself from the minute invisible state to the immensity of this vast universe. (पुरुष एवेदं सर्वम्) and (अतो जग्यायँश्च पुरुषः) are instances of Rk statements which bring out the relation between Iswara and his universe. All the phenomena and all the doings of the universe are the sport of Iswara, his divine play. He is greater than the universe. A part of the eternal spirit changes itself from the unmanifest into the manifest state. This is creation. It is the unmanifest and the manifest forms of the universe that are described by the words Asat and Sat respectively.³⁹ 'Asat' does not mean nothingness. It means the eternal reality called the Brahman who is nameless and formless and who is indescribable.⁴⁰ 'Asat' means the unexpressed and hence the undifferentiated. Conversely, 'Sat' means the expressed and hence the distinguished or differentiated.⁴¹ It is the Brahman, whose original nature or state is inexpressible because it is inconceivable, expanding himself into this huge universe and assuming the form of all the multitudes of objects to which names can be given as they have form and shape. "What is called Prakrti in the manifest, tangible state is hidden in the unmanifest supreme reality before creation (*i.e.* of the universe)".⁴² Since creation, existence and dissolution are all the work of this single supreme power, it is described by such attributes as vama (वाम), palita (पलित) and hota (होता).⁴³

As the fragile strings coming out of a spider become the spider's intricate web, as sparks issue from fire and become masses of heat on light, even so do all creatures, all worlds and all gods are shot out of this primal spirit and assume diverse forms and become differentiated. This fundamental spirit is the Truth of all truths, the Reality of all real things. He is all that is mortal and he is all that is immortal. He is the body and he is the soul as well. Impelled by his own almighty will, this immortal spirit pervades the mortal universe of mortal things. (अमर्त्यो मर्त्येना सयोनिः) (अवरानाविवेश) and other such statements⁴⁴ clearly reveal the truth of the view herein expounded. What we, in our practical affairs, call the

individual bodies and what we call the individual souls are all manifestations of Iswara himself. Hence these Rk statements have to be interpreted to mean that the supreme spirit, immortal in his essential nature, enters into and becomes part of mortal bodily forms.

If the immortal Iswara did not enter into mortal forms, there would be no universe at all. But the existence of the universe and all its phenomena are realities which can no more be denied than we can deny ourselves. Hence the very existence of the universe is the best possible evidence of its supreme Maker too.

It may be asked whether this Iswara, who, according to this description, is perpetually preoccupied with – almost drowned in – the ever-changing phenomena of this universe which has a beginning and an end, is not himself limited by time and space. The answer is, “No; Iswara is not so bound or limited.” To speak of an Iswara having limitations of any sort is a sheer absurdity; it is a contradiction in terms. The universe is undoubtedly a finite thing, having a beginning and an end, that is, limited by time and space. But Iswara, the lord of the universe, its creator and controller, its protector and its dissolver, is himself infinite. No limitations of time or space or of any sort can bind him. The universe is under the sway of Iswara. It is extensive; its extensiveness is of such magnitude that it is indescribable, almost inconceivable. Yet this inconceivably extensive universe is in Iswara; both in its beginning and in its end, it is part and parcel of Him. The unfoldment of the meaning of the term ‘Satya’ bears out what is set forth here. सत्यम् consists of three letters स, ति and यम्. The extreme letters स and यम् denote Truth and the middle letter ति denotes untruth; but since this letter is bound on both sides by Truth, it is itself transformed into Truth.⁴⁵ What is part of Reality cannot be unreal. In other words, this universe of space and time, having a beginning and an end is enveloped by Iswara who has no beginning or end. In such descriptions as महो देवो मर्यादाविवेश

मर्त्य and अमर्त्य are both described as springing from the same योनि or womb. In other words, what is immortal and what is mortal are of common origin. After creating the universe, Prajapati realised within himself, "I am the universe. Since, created by me, the universe is inseparable from me, I myself am the universe. There is no universe outside of me, apart from me, independent of me."

The root cause and source of creation in all its diversity is the will of Iswara. "Indra by his unique, matchless power, assumes just those forms which he wills to take,"⁴⁶ says the Rk Samhita. It is such statements of the Rk Samhita that are the basis of the description of the Para Brahman, the supreme reality in the Brhad-Aranyaka and other Upanishads. The section of the Brhad-Aranyaka, called Madhu-Vidya Prakarana, and other sections bearing on the same theme are all based on the Rg Vedic statements dealing with the relation between Iswara and creation.⁴⁷

The Rk Samhita speaks of the sage Dadhichi as having imparted the highest knowledge to the twin-gods called the Asvins.⁴⁸ This knowledge is what has been called Tvashtavidya or Adityavidya. The Brahman is Apurva; nothing even existed or could exist before him. For he is Ananta. He has no limits; beginning and end, before and after have no meaning in relation to him. He has been, is and shall be. He is the eternal and infinite reality. Indra and Aditya are terms which describe the Brahman Himself. The transcendental reality proclaimed in the Upanishads in the formula, औपनिषदं ब्रह्म is none other than the Tvashta or Indra or Aditya of the Rg Veda.

Sayana, in his commentary, notes, "Here the Supreme Soul is Himself designated Indra. Like Akasa or ether, (Immaterial, formless, intangible, inconceivable and all-pervasive) he is all-penetrating and omnipresent. He is eternal joy. By His matchless, almighty will, He transforms Himself as the universe. All conscious beings in the universe are the supreme spirit Himself."

Iswara, who is described by such names as Indra and who creates the whole universe, is the Poet. The entire universe created by Him is his poem. He expresses Himself in the entire universe of diversity and becomes the co-ordinating, unifying, harmonising principle.⁴⁹ "This Indra himself is the original of all the forms (of all things).

"In order to reveal this fact, he assumes an endless variety of forms (पुरुष) by his unparalleled powers. Thousands of horses are harnessed to his chariot," says the Rk Samhita.⁵⁰ Indra himself is the horses, the tens of thousands of beings symbolically described here.

This supreme spirit is Vaisvanara (one of the names of Agni). He is the cosmic spirit. He is Jatavedas (another name for Agni). All the gods are diverse expressions of his glory. "As all the parts of a chariot depend upon its axel, so too do all the gods depend on and derive their existence from this original spirit."⁵¹

Whoever may be the Rshi or the seer that sings of this original spirit which is the cause of all things and by whatever name he may describe this spirit, the same comparison is made so often that there seems to be a certain inevitability about it. The original, causal principle may sometimes be called Atman and sometimes Niyati' (lit the regulating principle). But the sages seem to have felt the necessity to use the relation between the wheels of a chariot and its axel as comparison most appropriate to describe the relation between the Creator and his creation, namely the universe.⁵²

This Atman is the lord of all beings. The spokes of a wheel lies within the wheel, between the axel and the felly, bounded by and bound fast by them; the very existence of the spokes is determined by the axel and the felly. Even so, all beings are contained in and controlled by this Atman. All beings, all gods, all worlds – everything is subject to and dependent on this supreme soul.⁵³

“The cosmic wheel, which has a uniform circumference and which cannot wear out, goes on turning in endless cycles. On its top the five lokapalas (lords and protectors of worlds), and men of five colours are employed in discharging their several appointed functions relating to the conduct of the universe. Surya who is the very eye of the universe, charged with waters, goes his perpetual rounds. This solar sphere is pervasive of the whole universe, and all worlds are contained in it.”⁵⁴

In the Brhad-Aranyaka Upanishad there is the description of the Para Brahman and his nature in the passage beginning द्वे वाच ब्रह्मणो रूपे (II. 3. 1). That entire description is the description of this cosmic wheel called Brahmachakra. This wheel is described as having two manifestations, one with a form and the other without form. It is said to be at once mortal and immortal, fixed and moving. It exists and is real; at the same time, it is evanescent and is, in this sense, not real. It exists in time; yet it is timeless. It is the original cause and controller of this entire universe of phenomena, which comes into being, has existence and is finally dissolved. All worlds and all their affairs which are subject to the law of time are under the sway of this cosmic wheel manifesting itself as Samvatsara (lit—a year).⁵⁵

In the description of the nature and functioning of the cosmic wheel, Aditya and Samvatsara are said to be identical. Aditya is said to have limbs or component parts (Avayavas) whose nature is to be moving and changeful. But Aditya, who manifests himself as Samvatsara, is non-moving and immovable and hence changeless. In other words, Aditya is at once static and dynamic, stable and changeful. In his original essential nature, he is eternally changeless. But in his manifestations, he is perpetually changeful and variable.

The description of Aditya is given thus: “Samvatsara which is motionless and constant has six burdens (Bharas). Samvatsara is Truth. It is Aditya. It is the highest principle. Beams of rays subserve this Samvatsara, also called Aditya.

All the worlds which are variable in nature are dependant upon this Original principle which is invariable and constant.”⁵⁶

“Aditya, the first principle of all things bears in himself the three worlds like the earth (Kshiti) which produces all crops and generates the rains. He also carries in his own being Agni, Vayu or Indra and Surya who are the gods shedding their beneficent influence upon and protecting all the worlds. He dwells in the most exalted regions. No one, nothing can make him wane a bit.”⁵⁷

Since the axel of this cosmic wheel called Aditya carries the burden of the entire universe, the strain on it is heavy beyond description. Yet it does not give way or yield. It is beginningless. It knows no decay. It is ageless. It is the stay and prop of the whole universe. There is not a wheel belonging to the mortal world whose axel does not give away and break under an insupportable weight. But the axel of this cosmic wheel neither breaks nor even under the inconceivable burden of the entire universe for which there can be no comparison at all. Its felly is not twisted or distorted.⁵⁸ This is the Brahma-chakra or Adityachakra.⁵⁹

Samvatsara and such other forces rely upon this fundamental supreme principle and, by means of their periodic, cyclic rotation and revolution, carry on the affairs of the worlds. This Aditya has greater radiance and effulgence than all other radiant things. This original Light is the source of light, to all radiant spheres like Aditya. “As all the parts of a wheel are held together and supported by a chariot’s axel, even so all the spheres of light are dependent on and are supported by this Divine Light.”⁶⁰

It is this original Light that is worshipped by all the gods as the principle of life and longevity (Ayus).⁶¹ The Rk Samhita hymns the praise of this Divine light as the tongue of all the gods and the *navel* (*i.e.* the central essence; nabhi) of immortality.⁶² It is the supreme Light known as Akshara in as much as

it is indestructible.⁶³ Thousands of Suns pale into nothingness before this Divine Light.⁶⁴

The abode of this Divine Light which is the source of light to all the radiant spheres of the heavens like Surya is described as Parama Vyoman or the highest of high heavens. "It is by this ineffable, inexhaustible Light dwelling in the highest of the high heavens that Surya and Chandra, the Sun and the Moon are sustained. It is also by the regulation and direction of this ineffable Light that the earth and the heavens are supported. So do the Upanishads sing the praise of this Divine Light and in their support they cite the statement of the Rk Samhita.⁶⁵ The Rk Samhita rhetorically asks—what is the use of reciting all the Vedas if one does not realise the essential nature of this Divine Light which, being inexhaustible and endless, is known as Akshara?⁶⁶

The supreme person of golden glory (Hiranmaya) who abides in Aditya is the unifying and harmonising principle which co-ordinates and keeps together all the worlds. This wheel is immortal beyond all doubt; yet it is natural that there should be a rise and fall, a certain effect of fluctuation about it. The original light is no doubt ageless and its radiance is irreducible and waneless; yet all that depends upon this light is bound to have the conditions of appearance and disappearance in a cyclic and, therefore, everchanging form.

In the Aitareya-Aranyaka, the sage Badhva describes all this in these words: "He whom we call the Supreme Being is himself of the form of Samvatsara (or time). As this Samvatsara rolls on, it is inevitable that all beings should experience a rise and fall. Aditya is the essential vital force of this Samvatsara. This supreme person who is formless and whose nature is consciousness is the same as Aditya. A part of this Aditya reflects itself and creates varied images in all things."⁶⁷ After this description, the sage cites in support of his view the following hymn of the Rk Samhita: "चित्रं देवानामुदगादनीकम् etc."⁶⁸ This Aditya who is the Cosmic Light is described as Param Jyoti or the Supreme Light and Jyotisham Jyotih or the Light of all lights.⁶⁹

This divine effulgence which is the “soul of all gods” and the “womb of all created things” pervades this universal home, dividing itself into three. The particular light which is assigned to each part of this universe is known as the lord of that world. Agni, Vayu (Indra) and Aditya are the well known names of the different forms and manifestations of this very Divine Light.⁷⁰

“By my intrinsic, inherent might I know all the affairs of the whole universe. (I am Jatavedas). My radiance is self-illuminating and, at the same time, it illuminates the entire universe. I am the vital principle that bestows consciousness to all things in the universe. I compass the whole universe, dividing my own self into three,” says the Rg Vedic hymn where the Cosmic Light proclaims its own sublime nature and work.⁷¹ This Cosmic Light further says—I myself am Vayu (Indra) who is the dweller in Antariksha or the lower heavens; I am Aditya too, who knows no waning and who lights up the entire world; and I am the Agni that consumes all the sacred offerings at the sacrificial fire.

The Brhad-Aranyaka says, “He (the Supreme spirit) divided himself into three forms and goes on to describe the divisions. And for this passage the basis is the statements of the Rk Samhita itself.⁷²

These three gods who have glowing radiant forms are spoken of as Kesins (lit—locks of hair).⁷³ As the flames of earthly fire are like of hair flying loose, Agni is called Kesin. Vayu, who abides in the lower heavens or the skies, flashes forth in tongues of lightning resembling locks of hair, he too is called Kesin. Aditya, who belongs to Dyuloka or the higher heavens, shines over all in the form of beams of rays resembling locks of hair. Hence, he too is named Kesin. The hymn beginning त्रयः केशिनः etc. (The three Kesins etc.) describes the different functions of these three Kesins as distinct because their external forms are different and distinct. But the author of the Brhad-Devata says that, as all the three are omnipresent and all-pervasive, it is not possible either to delimit their

territorial jurisdiction or to divide and distinguish their origins or functions in a precise manner. (I. 99) "It is not possible to define precisely either their birth or the sphere of their glorious sway and influence and its source. For the entire universe is pervaded by all three of them."⁷⁴

The Original Divine Light which is described as the Light of all lights is immovable and non-moving; it is constant and changeless.⁷⁵ But its various forms and manifestation like Agni and Aditya have a perpetually moving and changing nature. The protection of the universe belongs to their sphere. Lighting up the whole universe is their duty.

Ushas or Dawn has been praised – "This is the most exalted thing, the Light of all lights."⁷⁶ All these three guardians of the three worlds serve Ushas. "These mighty three serve Ushas,"⁷⁷ says the hymn. That is to say, they are under the command of this Light called Ushas and rule over the three worlds under its direction.

Epithets like Three-headed (त्रिमूर्धा), Triple (त्रिधातु), having three flanks (त्रिपाजस्य) and three-faced (त्र्यनीकम्) describe the various functions and the mode of self-expression and expansion of this original Light. It is addressed Agni, Aditya or Indra in different places, according to the circumstances and the context. Through its rays it sucks up all the essence (the vital waters) of the world (आदत्ते हि रसान्). Hence it is described as Aditya.⁷⁸ But it is as Agni that he draws up all the waters of the world by means of his powerfully hot rays. He does this in conjunction with Vayu. Again, Agni and Vayu, acting conjointly, make the world's sucked-up waters fall upon the world itself in the form of rain. For this reason and in connection with this particular activity, the Cosmic Light is termed Indra.⁷⁹

This Agni, who is the soul of all things, realises, through his own introspection, his own original nature, known as Para-Brahman, the holy and self-luminous Cosmic Light. and in the forms of Agni, Vayu and Surya he acquires certain peculiar

characteristics and, in these forms and manifestations, he finds self-expression. All the hosts of gods are nothing but diversified forms of Agni himself. This is the real and definite significance of the Rk statement एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति (Reality is one; but the knowing ones give it many names or describe it in many ways). The word 'one' in this famous Rk statement denotes Aditya, according to Sayana and Agni, according to the authors of Nirukta. It may be said to denote Indra too. For all these are but synonymous terms. Agni himself is Aditya or Indra or the Supreme Soul.

“Agni at first manifested himself as Aditya in Dyu-loka or the higher heavens. And then, he incarnated himself as Jatavedas (the All-Knowing spirit) on earth. The same Agni, the benefactor of human beings, assumed the forms of lightning or air and spread himself over Antariksha or the lower heavens.”⁸⁰

“Agni, who is Vaisvanara, becomes, by his unearthly power, the first of all elements and shines on earth as Agni (fire) at night, as Surya (the Sun) in the daytime. Thus he discharges his (self-chosen) duty of protecting the world.”⁸¹

Agni is described as Visvapsu⁸² just because he has all the countless forms of things in the world. 'Visvapsu' means one who has all forms (of all universal objects). The hymns praise him, “O Agni, Thou art Indra in as much as thou showerest all boons on us. Thou art thyself Vishnu who is praised by all. Thou art Brahma who knows what is wealth in the real sense. Thou art Varuna who has taken vows. Thou art Mitra who destroys all enemies and who is worthy of all praise. Thou art Aryaman who bestows on people what they wish for. Thou art Amsa who is only another form of Surya. O thou Agni, thou thyself art Rudra who drives and scatters away the Asuras or demons from the three worlds.⁸³ And thou art thyself all the winds.”

Agni, by his own inherent power, makes his original being pervade over the whole universe in such innumerable forms.

This is what is denoted by the attribute तनूनपात्. Since he has spread over all the three worlds, he is described as 'Trita'.⁸⁴ It is for this reason, he has three ties that bind him.⁸⁵ According to these three bonds, he assumes three forms and discharges his three-fold functions. It is this fact that entitles him in his triple form to be described as 'the mighty three' or 'the mighty trinity' (त्रयो वीराः). The duties of protecting the worlds, pertaining to these lords of the three worlds, assume an endless variety of forms. Hence these three deities themselves are described by other alternative synonymous terms which indicate innumerable different forms. Mitra, Varuna and all other transfigurations are merely the special forms of might and glory belonging to this trinity. This is illustrated by such Rk statements as मित्रो अग्निर्भवति etc.....⁸⁶. The Nirukta explanation is as follows:

“By its sublime glory, the single supreme deity is praised in many ways. All the other gods are only manifestations of the same single Atman.”

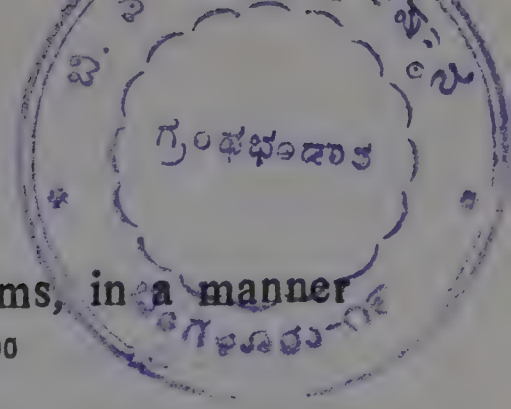
The oneness of the supreme deity is borne out by such hymns as the following – न हि वो.....

“O ye gods, there is none among ye that is young. Ye all are great souls, and all worthy of worship.”⁸⁷

As explained above, Agni and others who are the lords of the earth (Prithvi), the skies or the lower heavens (Antariksha) and the higher heavens (Dyu-loka) are well known under many other names indicating their pervasiveness and their respective functions and spheres of sway and influence. Hence all the other gods are classified in relation to the three worlds which are under these three manifestations of fundamental supreme spirit. In the Brhaddevata, all the gods are classified into – (i) Agni and all other gods dwelling on and belonging to the earth; (ii) Indra and all the gods of the skies; and (iii) Aditya and all the gods of the higher heavens. (*Br. Devata* 1.22).

All these different gods are not different from and independent of the lords of the three worlds. They really are only parts, aspects, manifestations of the might and glory and influence of the original spirit of which they are emanations. Brhaspati and others are only modified forms of Agni; Vayu and others are aspects of Indra assuming different forms and names; Varuna and others are the modifications of Aditya. All these divisions and classifications are merely verbal; they are necessitated by the practical requirement of linguistic description. They do not indicate distinct delimitations of regional control or jurisdiction either. The spheres of influence which are said to belong to the different manifestations of the cosmic spirit are not watertight divisions. There are hymns in several parts of the Rk Samhita, which unambiguously state that Agni himself bears the names of Mitra, Varuna and so on in accordance with the particular functions carried out by him at different times. The hymns establish an identity between Indra and Varuna and other apparently different gods. Their real original nature is a reflection of the fundamental principle known as Aditya.

About the identity and the nature of the Asvins, even Yaska and other great Vedic Commentators are divided in their views. Some describe the Asvins as standing for Day and Night (Ahoratra); some speak of them as Surya and Chandra; the Sun and the Moon; and others describe them as the physicians of the gods. One view is that they are the earth and the heavens themselves, Dyava-Prithvi, in as much as they are all-pervasive. Between the two, one is said to derive his origin from Antariksha or the skies, the lower heavens; the other from Dyu-loka, the higher heavens. The Samhita itself states this in one or two passages.⁸⁸ These passages are the foundation for the view expressed by those who identify the Asvins with Surya and Chandramah, the Sun and the Moon.⁸⁹ Relying on the same passages, it is possible to identify one of the Asvins with Indra and the other with Aditya. In the same manner, Ushas and Aditi and other deities are also subject-matter for differences of



interpretation. To describe them in precise terms, in a manner above all controversy, is well-nigh impossible.⁹⁰

In certain places regional delimitations are attributed to their control and influence. In some other passages their sway is said to pervade over the whole universe. The same thing is true of Pushan and Bhaga and other deities.

But one thing is beyond all ambiguity. There can be no reasonable divergence of opinion on this point. And this point is that, irrespective of the differences of description or number or classification of the deities, all of them are part and parcel of, and all of them merely modified manifestations of the same divine Cosmic Light. All the gods, possessing as they do consciousness and will, are bound to carry out the regulations of the original spirit. They have to keep the universe going in all its cyclic manifestations and modifications.

The fundamental principle, the original Cosmic spirit, which is unique, non-pareil, assumes multifarious forms and carries on the affairs and activities of this universe. In the forms, Surya, Savita and so on, this cosmic principle causes and generates the universe. As Pushan and other allied forms, it sustains the universe. Assuming such forms as Ushas and Surya, it illuminates the universe and energises it. And manifesting itself as Varuna and so on, it acts as the guardian and Protective Principle of the universe. In this manner, all the activities relating to the existence and other changes occurring to the universe happen only through the prompting and direction of the fundamental spirit. All these various functions can comprehensively be indicated by the term Savita, which is one of the most significant names of the Absolute.⁹¹

The matter is clinched when we remember the following consideration. Varuna and other gods have no individual or personal aims or purposes or motives. To fulfil the purposes, to carry out the will of the original cosmic spirit – that is the only function, aim, purpose or motive of everyone of the other

seemingly different gods. This is what is meant by carrying out the central Law of the universe. The hymn makes the very divinity of the gods conditional. Let, for instance, the hymn beginning विश्वे देवाः सुमनसः etc. be examined.⁹² It states that the gods as well as men can attain divinity. And those that are divine have been able to attain divinity just because they carry out, sans intermission, the Cosmic Law and maintain Cosmic Harmony.

CHAPTER II

Cosmic Law

RTA

Cosmic Law which both pervades and transcends the universe is denoted by the term Rta.¹ This means that all the phenomena of the universe are subject to and regulated Law and this Law is what is called Rta. Rta is that original power which regulates all the dynamic and changing phenomena of the universe and maintains the universe in a stable condition. All the gods like Indra are subject to this Law and are its guardians too. Rta is the one unchanging and unchangeable Primal force in the midst of all the perpetually changing processes and doings of the universe. The creative force of the universe, the law that governs its conduct, the order that pervades all things in the cosmos—all these are implied by the term Rta.

The power of Rta is non-temporal and incomparable. It is unique. It is the firm and binding principle that holds all together; for its nature is attractive and cohesive. The very existence and expansion of earth and heaven which are immense and infinite depend upon Rta.² It is in conformity to Rta that Indra in the form of Indra appears in the heavens and lights up and energises the whole world.³ The effulgence of Aditya, who is the very eye of Mitra and Varuna, is only a reflection of the power of Rta.⁴ The wheel of Aditya, manifesting itself as Samvatsara follows the course of Rta.⁵ The appearance of Ushas (Dawn) and its activity of illuminating the whole universe are recording to the purpose of Rta.⁶ The flow of the rivers, the rise and fall of tides and all other phenomena that occur with cyclic regularity and sequence are regulated and controlled by the law of Rta.⁷

Rta has two aspects : it is both all-pervasive and transcendental. It permeates the entire universe and goes beyond it. Its writ runs everywhere not only within the almost limitless universe but far beyond it. Though in its original, intrinsic nature Rta transcends the power of time and space, the gods make it take the form of Satya or Truth and hence so fashion it as to be capable of being applied to the affairs of the universe.⁸ It is for this reason that the gods are described by such epithets as Rtavans, the possessors of Rta or Rtavrdhas, those who bear the burden (of carrying out) Rta.⁹ Rta is greater than the gods themselves. The very necessity for the origin of the gods is the need to carry out the purposes of Rta. Hence it is that the gods are given the attributes Rtajah or Rtajatah, those who are born of Rta.¹⁰

When Rta, which in its unmanifest state is formless, becomes manifest and active, it is compared to a chariot. And Varuna and other gods, who serve the purpose of making Rta take a particular form, are compared to the charioteers."¹¹ Indeed, the gods attain all their divine might and glory just because they follow the path of Rta.¹² The hymn तिस्रो भूमीर्धायन् (11, 27, 8) etc. makes this fact quite clear. It is only by the aid of Rta that Mitra and Varuna are able to gain the lordship of the universe.¹³

It is the very nature of the gods that they follow the path of Rta and carry out its will and purposes. That is why it is said to be their duty to be the guardians of Rta. They are able to enforce Rta upon the worlds just because they themselves conform to it in the fullest measure. Just because Varuna and other gods obey the law of Rta, they are described in the hymns as Vratapas or those who fulfil their vows.

Agni, Indra and Aditya are all Vratapas. "Vaisvanara manifests himself in the form of Aditya in the most exalted Dyu-loka and performs all vows (sacred duties undertaken by

him). Agni who is the doer of the noblest deeds assumes the form of Surya and lights up the highest heavens (Dyu-loka)," says a hymn.¹⁴

Another runs, "O Agni, lord of the Earth, thou art a model for all gods and men, an ideal to emulate; for thou undertake vows and fulfil them thyself."¹⁵

Still another says, "Only Indra is able to know the intrinsic nature of Vaisvanara, by virtue of his being an unfailing performer of vows." (व्रत)

"All the earth and the heavens are stable because they rest on the virtue acquired by Indra – who himself is Parjanya – through the performance of vows" (व्रत), states yet another hymn.¹⁶

All these statements proclaim the fact that gods are performers of vows, व्रत. Performance of vows or appointed duties is enjoined upon and binding upon all the gods. The Adityas¹⁷ are the most celebrated of all the gods in this discharging of the duties devolving upon them. Even among them, Mitra and Varuna come in for special praise under such epithets as Rtavrdhas (those who undertake vows or duties), Dhrtavratas (those who have undertaken the responsibility of fulfilling vows or duties), and Rtadhyakshas (those who preside over the performance of sacred duties undertaken). It is by emulating the example of Varuna, the lord of all worlds, who performs all his duties unfailingly, that all the spheres of light discharge their respective functions ceaselessly and promptly. No one can transgress the commandment of Varuna.¹⁸

Often we come across passages in the Rk Samhita where the terms Rta and Satya are used synonymously. And conversely, Anrta or Asatya are their opposites, also used synonymously. In other words Rta comes to have the meaning of truth and Anrta, of untruth. Truth and untruth have to be understood in their widest sense, with all their implications. Thus, truth would mean truthfulness of speech, sincerity of purpose, honest

conduct, faithful action and so on. Untruth would imply the contraries of all these. Varuna, the lord of all worlds, is perpetually going his rounds, watching (and noting) the truthfulness and falsity of all creatures.¹⁹ That is why all the worlds dread Varuna.²⁰

Varuna and the other gods keep their vows in two ways. In the first place, they set an example to all the duties assigned to them. Secondly, they punish all those who violate the law of Rta²¹ and, positively, they confer all boons – all the prosperity wished for – on all those who obey the law of Rta promptly, with unfailing regularity. To those who conform to Rta, all the forces of nature are beneficial and congenial. This goes without saying.²²

Three terms are employed to denote transgressions against Rta. These are Anrta (untruth and falsity), Vrijina (sinful conduct and action) and Dvaya (equivocation and double dealing). A life which is full of falsehood and false behaviour and action, which is unscrupulous and deceptive, which is characterised by other forms of immorality is fit to be punished. Varuna and other gods are invoked by the hymns and a prayer is made that they may be pleased to disentangle and separate Anrta from Rta²³ and, by their lordly sway, that they may confer safety and well-being upon the world. To violate the laws enforced by Varuna and other gods is not merely a crime against those particular gods but it is a violation of the universal Law itself. Hence such transgression is fit for and liable to the most condign punishment. The hymns utter the warning, “Agni inflicts the severest punishment on those that commit transgressions against the law of Rta.”²⁴ Both the positive and the negative aspects of this magisterial role of the gods are mentioned in hymns like – “Mitra and Varuna destroy Anrta and, by preserving and promoting Rta, they enjoy blessedness forever.”²⁵ There is a variation on the same theme in “Surya, who is the very eye of the universe, vigilantly watches and takes note of the uprightness and crookedness of men.”²⁶

‘Dvaya’ means, literally, double-dealing. In speech it takes the form equivocation, deliberate ambiguity in order to mislead the other person. It is an attempt to make the best of both worlds, to gain at once the advantage of wrong-doing and upright conduct. In behaviour and action, it implies all forms of cunning and deception. Such conduct is not straight and proper. It is full of falsehood and falseness. Therefore every man who desires to be good wishes and tries to avoid this path and to pursue the pure and noble path of Rta. On account of human frailty, the very best man may err. In such a situation man may lose his way and go astray. Therefore a prayer is frequently made to Agni and other gods begging for their forgiveness and asking their guidance in order to return to the right path.²⁷ If one, at all times, follows the path of Rta, all sin is bound to be destroyed.²⁸ It is because Surya always follows the course of Rta that he is described by the title, ‘Advayavin,’ the one who is never a double-dealer.²⁹

Cosmic Law

YAJNA OR SACRIFICE

The gods who are the guardians of Rta are by nature faithful performers of duties they have undertaken. The one aim of their vigilant, unvarying performance of self-chosen and self-assumed missions is the well-being and welfare of the universe and the achievement of cosmic harmony, the universal order. This is a duty which belongs to not the gods alone but to the human beings as well. Just as the gods follow the path of Rta strictly, without the slight deviation and by so doing, they are the protectors and promoters of Rta, even so should human beings strictly adhere to the course of Rta and not allow the rhythm and harmony of the universe to be violated in the least degree. It is their appointed, prescribed duty to discharge the sacred obligations that fall to their portion.

The preservation and promotion of Rta and, by this means, the achievement of cosmic harmony depend upon the existence of the proper relation between the earth and heaven (Dyava-prithvi). It is a reciprocal matter, an act of co-operation which implies and involves an intimate mutual relation between partners. Water which is a common possession of earth and heaven is the generative cause of food which is an indispensable necessity for the existence and preservation of the earth. Having gained food, which is their wealth in the real sense, by the help of water, human beings propitiate and please the gods through the performance of Yajnas or sacrifices. A hymn says that waters (in the form of rain showers) are a common possession (of the earth and heaven). The showers protect the earth and the Agnis (sacrificial fires) protect the heavenly worlds.³⁰ Water, the common or joint property of earth and heaven, rises upward from the earth to the skies (Antariksha). And from the skies it makes a downward journey, descending upon the human world in rain-bearing clouds and bestowing on earth life-giving and life-sustaining showers. Yajna or sacrifice is the fruit thereof and the several sacrificial fires (Agnis), who are the recipients of sacrificial offerings, are themselves satisfied with the sacrifice and they make Dyu-loka, the highest heavens satisfied as well.

Thus the relation between Parjanya and Agni, the rain and fire is similar to the relation between the seed and the sapling (which develops into the plant or tree). Rain-showers thrive and prosper on Yajnas and Yajnas thrive and increase through the abundance of rain-showers. The relation between the two is a reciprocal thing; it is one of interdependence. Parjanya and Yajna (showers and sacrifices) are at once the cause and the effect of each other. The existence as well as the destiny of earth and heaven depends upon this inter-dependence between rain and sacrifice.³¹ The Upanishads and other works allied to them describe as Yajna or sacrifice Parjanya's own act of giving rain-showers to the world. The Chandogya Upanishad establishes an identity between rain-fall and the sacrificial fire in these

words: "Know thou Gautama, rain itself is the sacrificial fire; the winds are its fuel; the clouds are the sacrificial fumes of smoke; lightnings are the flames; thunderbolts are the sparks. The gods offer in this sacrificial fire, which is rain itself, the oblation of the Soma juice".³²

Rain is not only the very means of life to earth and heaven and to the beings belonging to them but it is also always engaged in bringing about and maintaining and promoting an intimate, co-operative relation between the earth and heaven. The Aitareyaaranyaka says, "Prithvi or earth is the first half and Dyu-loka or heaven, the second half. Through showers of rain, a relationship develops between the two. Parjanya or rain is, therefore, the link between the two worlds."³³ It is for this reason that Parjanya is praised as "that in and by which the worlds live" and as "that thing in which abides the Atman, the supreme soul, who is the stay and support of the universe".³⁴

It is by the divine decree of Varuna that the gods offer the the sacrificial oblation in Parjanya and that Parjanya showers rains upon the earth.³⁵ Just as the gods themselves are the guides and preceptors to human beings in the matter of the observance of Rta, even so, they are themselves the guides in the matter of the performance of Yajnas or sacrifices too. For they preach by their own example; all their activities are acts of sacrifice. Yajna is nothing but an arrangement or contrivance devised and established by them for the safe-guarding of Rta or the cosmic law.³⁶ That is how Yajna or sacrifice comes to be "the abode of Rta," "the home of Rta," "the dwelling of Rta" or "the path of Rta" and so on.³⁷ The gods, who are the guardians of Rta and its keepers, are themselves the designers and makers of Yajna or sacrifice. They are perpetually engaged in contemplating the native, generative cause of Rta (that is, the supreme spirit which gives it birth) and they create Yajna in order to support and sustain earth and heaven.³⁸

Vaisvanara, the foremost among the gods, their leader and chief, himself realised through penance and self contemplation

the spirit and significance of Yajna or sacrifice, became its first Hota,³⁹ the performer of sacrifice and taught the gods the secret of the act of Yajna. Then the gods offered their devotion and worship to Prajapati, the Lord of all beings, who himself is sacrifice embodied, by means of their sacrifice which took the form of meditating upon and willing to do their appointed duty of observing Rta and governing and protecting the worlds. Since then, Yajna or sacrifice became the native cause, the origin and beginning of all righteous acts and prescribed duties of the world.⁴⁰ These holy and benevolent rites by Yajna or sacrifice became established in Dyu-loka, the highest heavens and caused the gods to occupy and hold their respective stations.

Yajna as has not infrequently been wrongly interpreted, is not an act of appeasement rendered to the gods for the sole purpose of securing for human beings merely earthly goods and personal, selfish prosperity. The act of sacrifice is the instrument of maintaining the cycle of the cosmic wheel called Rta. The universe is replete with sacrifice. Creation, existence and dissolution are all manifestations of sacrifice. The act by which the cosmic spirit finds self-expression by transforming itself from its unmanifest into multifarious manifest forms is an act of sacrifice; indeed, that is the Prime, the original sacrifice. Since the entire universe is charged with sacrifice it is the duty of every individual to understand the secret of cosmic sacrifice and conform to the sacrificial pattern prescribed for the world. The duty of the Panchajanas, the five orders of beings, like gods and men is the keeping and fostering of cosmic sacrifice, Visva-Yajna. This is their vow, their mission. Yajna or sacrifice performed in a holy, pious spirit is the very navel of the universe (Visva-nabhi), the very pivot round which the universe turns. Yajna is the central thread binding together the souls of men with the souls of the gods.⁴¹ It is the single universal fabric which remains one, although the warp and woof of the universe are a multitude of diverse forms.⁴² Yajna, in the process of universal creation spreads out over the entire

cosmos in the form of ethereal (Antariksha) strings. It extends with increasing reach through such acts as worship performed by the gods. Prajapati first fashioned Yajna and through it he wove into one fabric the warp and weft of the three worlds.⁴³ The act of sacrifice is indispensable for the three worlds to remain in a well knit and enduring condition even as a fabric must consist of firm fibres weaving and knitting must be strong in order that the fabric may be durable. Yajna is the unifying thread binding together all common and uncommon things. This unifying principle, called Yajna, expands and contracts according as the universe expands and contracts. It adapts its own destiny to the destiny of the cosmos.⁴⁴ It demands all beings and all things as oblation, the sacrificial offering. And again for the good of all beings it comes into being and expresses itself and expands for evermore. In this way the Rk Samhita establishes the identity between the cosmic reality and sacrifice and, in innumerable passages, it describes how sacrifice is the fundamental and ultimate cause of all cosmic phenomena, how it is the protector and saviour of the universe and how it is the unifying, harmonising principle on which the creation, the existence and stability and well-being of the whole universe depends.

The word 'nabhi' has several meanings such as the dwelling-place, pervasive relation, protective principle, the binding force, the place of origin or source, and so on. पृच्छामि त्वा भुवनस्य नाभिः "I ask thee what is the pivot on which the world rests and around which it turns." That is the question raised in a certain passage of the Rk Samhita. The answer given is अयं यज्ञो भुवनस्य नाभिः,⁴⁵ "This yajna or sacrifice is the pivot of the universe." Sacrifice, then, is the primal cause of the creation and existence of all things and it is the central harmonising principle which knits into one the gods and men and things. That is the import of the passage. "O thou Agni, may all sacrifices become the means of promoting the bonds of friendship between us and ye (gods)."⁴⁶ Passages like this explain and emphasise the universal bond that holds all

cosmos together. Sacrifice is the guardian and sustainer of all things. It is what protects and nourishes all, gods and men alike. Hence, too, it is meant to describe it as the nabhi or the central essence of the universe.

In the same mantra occurs the statement “इयं वेदिः पृथिव्या अन्तः”, “This sacrificial altar is the very end or final limit or frontier of the earth.” That is how the mantra describes the dimensions or magnitude of the sacrificial altar. Again, statements in the Brahmanas declare, “This sacrificial altar is earth itself; it is the skies (Antariksha); it is the highest heavens (Dyu-loka); it is Aditya; it is all the stars.”⁴⁷ In other words, such passages reveal the comprehensiveness and profundity of the meaning and significance attached to Yajna or sacrifice in the Vedas and Vedic lore. They leave no loophole. They are guilty of no ambiguity. Yet it is astonishing to observe how much of wrong interpretation is possible when even genuine scholars shut their eyes to facts. However, the Vedic idea of sacrifice is, beyond any shadow of doubt, that Prajapati, the Creator, manifests himself as sacrifice. In other words, he sacrifices himself. Creation, existence and dissolution are all Prajapati's sacrifice of himself. He apparently spends himself and creates the universe. That is सृष्टि or creation. Creation sustains itself through sacrifice. And finally the creator dissolves or spends out the universe. That is sacrifice too. Then he recreates the universe, which in dissolution has become unmanifest as part of Prajapati's original form. To put it graphically, it has become atomic, micro-cosmic, during its dissolved state. Then again, it blossoms out into its macro-cosmic state. The earth and all the worlds are the support and repositories which Prajapati creates for his own act of sacrifice, his own self-expression. He finds himself perpetually in spending himself perpetually. Since the Lord is the performer of sacrifice, it is no wonder that the dimensions of the sacrificial altar should be co-extensive with the entire universe. Prajapati himself is the sacrificer; the sacrificial altar; the act of sacrifice; the sacrificial offering or oblation; the

recipient of the sacrifice or the person that is pleased through it; and the fruit of the sacrifice or what is sought as the attainment by virtue of the sacrifice. That, in a nut-shell, is the Vedic meaning of sacrifice.

Thus Yajna or sacrifice reveals the fact of cosmic unity and the supreme truth that the Para Brahman is the ground of this unity. That very absolute called Para Brahman in the Upanishads is called in the Samhita and the Brahmanas Prajapati. And in certain passages Prajapati and Yajna are identified.⁴⁸ The creation of the universe is itself the fruit of Prajapati's Yajna and tapas, his sacrifice and penance. Prajapati, the fundamental first cause of the universe was one and without a second (Advitiya) before his act of creation. In order to perform Yajna which is the means to creation, he offered up himself as the oblation. य आत्मदा बलदा⁴⁹ and other mantras show that in the cosmic sacrifice Prajapati fulfilled the work of creation by sacrificing himself. Mortality and immortality are his shadows. This Yajna performed by Prajapati is the cause of the universe and the motive of creation. It is the means to the well-being and well-doing of beings. Creation, existence and dissolution which are the manifestations of Yajna have been going on in a cyclic manner from beginningless time. And for this reason, Yajna is also described as the cosmic wheel.⁵⁰

As he is the author of the universe, Prajapati is called Visva Karma. Creative power and the fitness and right to perform Yajna acquired through it both belong only to this Visva Karma or Creator. Since he has entered into all worlds and all created beings and things and since he contains them all in his own being, Visva Karma is also described as Bhauvana, the creator and container of the universe. He is the lord of all the worlds and so he is Indra.⁵¹ As he has spread over all the three worlds and become त्रित, Trita, he is himself Agni. Finally, as he is self-luminous and lights up all the worlds, he is Aditya too.⁵²

Visva Karma offered all (the universe) as oblation in his Yajna, the cosmic sacrifice. He willed to re-create the very universe which he had offered up as oblation at his sacrifice. And he entered, by his own will, into the hearts of all creatures created by himself and became their inner controller, their Antaryami. This, in brief, is the description of the act of creation, existence and dissolution of the universe.⁵³

It is a sport to the Lord of the Universe to withdraw into himself the entire universe and remain single, singular, unique. From the standpoint of the the universe, dissolution may seem to be destruction. But from the Lord's own standpoint, it is but a particular state (of existence). Yajna, which is praised as the very soul of all beings and all existences, is also the thing that swallows up everything. "Yajna consumes all and hence Yajna itself is the consumer (of all)". Since all beings are swallowed up by Yajna, it is called भुज्यु, the consumer. Even as it is the nature of Prajapati to create the whole universe, it is also his nature to consume it all up.⁵⁴ All the universe is his food. Nothing that is created can be everlasting. Everything must undergo dissolution. Prajapati, who is the creator, is also the Dissolver.

When Prajapati offers up to himself the whole universe as the sacrificial oblation, it is Dissolution or Pralaya. At this time Death envelops the whole universe and holds all in its embrace. Then Iswara is One without a second. But he again wills to have a second, to become Sadvitiya. In other words, he wants to multiply and become many. The period when the universe evolves and expands is not everlasting. Similarly, the period of dissolution is also not everlasting. The universe enveloped in death must be born again. But there is a condition. It depends upon the will of the Lord. As soon as Iswara wills that there should be a universe, the act of evolution begins.⁵⁵

Visva Karma whose self-sacrifice was the original cause both of the creation and of the expansion of the universe is described

by the epithet 'Vachaspati' in passage like वाचस्पति विश्वकर्माणं etc. It would seem relevant and needful to discuss the appropriateness of the new title. This epithet expresses the relation between speech and the cosmic sacrifice made by Visva Karma, which was the cause of and which took the form of creation. Just as Visva Karma is the original spirit embodying itself in and pervading over the three worlds, so too is the goddess of speech a cosmic spirit and her very embodied form is the universe. Visvakarma is known as Vachaspati because he is the husband of this goddess of speech.

The goddess of speech is praised in certain texts as the instrument which reveals the relation between earth and heaven⁵⁶ and in other texts as the means of establishing an equation between sacrifice and the embodied universe with all its innumerable things.⁵⁷ Prajapati is the source of the origin of speech which takes the form of mantra. And he is its culmination and fulfilment. It is on the basis of speech that the unmanifest is made manifest by Prajapati. For the embodied universe is a universe of form and name. It is only with the aid of speech that Prajapati could give to his embodied universe 'a local habitation and a name.' In other words, only speech can make possible the classification and identification of all the endless things in the universe. It must be mentioned incidentally that speech should be understood in the widest possible sense, as including thoughts, images, percepts, concepts and so on, either silent or expressed in symbols of sound or other symbols.

ब्रह्मायं वाचः परमं व्योम,⁵⁸ "This speech is the Brahman himself, the All-High". Such statements as this identify Speech with the Brahman himself. This passage of the Rk Samhita is interpreted to mean that the mantra suggests that the magnitude of the Brahman and of Speech are the same and both are immeasurable. The passage also states that wherever the sway of the Brahman extends, the sway and influence of speech also extends there. In other words, the power and influence of both over the entire universe is coextensive.⁵⁹

Speech is the Brahman, and the Brahman is Truth. The whole universe is shot with the Brahman. And, for the same reason, it is replete with speech. It is therefore the sage Grtsamada, the son of the sage Sunahotra uttered the praise of speech. "As Visvakarma, the first cause of the universe pervades the three worlds in such forms as Aditya, even so, does the goddess of speech, who is his own manifestation, pervade over the whole universe in many forms like Ushas."⁶⁰ In the statements of Sruti or the Vedas, whatever goddesses are praised, they are all different manifestations and forms of the goddess of speech herself. The different forms in which the glorious effulgence of the lords of the three worlds, Agni, Indra and Aditya manifest themselves in the three worlds are nothing but so many forms of the grace and glory of the goddess of speech herself.⁶¹

The goddess of speech follows Agni of the earth in the form of Ila (praise); she follows Indra or Vaidyutagni in the form of Sarasvati; she follows Aditya in the higher heavens, in the form of Bharati. (B. D. III. 13.) Thus the same principle, called speech, pervades over all the worlds in three different forms, corresponding to the three forms of Visvakarma. Speech serves the three principal forms of the cosmic Light either in a single, undifferentiated form or in differentiated, multiple forms. And she reveals her identity with these manifestations. It is because speech has this cosmic pervasiveness that she is praised as all-pervasive in the mantras अद्वाग्वदन्ति and देवीं वाचमजनयन्त.⁶²

In the Rk Samhita, the goddess of speech describes herself in a certain mantra in these words: "I pervade over the whole universe along with all the Rudras, Vasus and Adityas. I bear in myself all the gods like Mitra and Varuna. I am the Queen of all the worlds, knowing, as I do, the Brahman, the eternal spirit, who is worthy of the highest adoration and the deepest meditation. I myself am the all-pervasive spirit. All those beings that live on food, all those that are skilled in speech, all those that have the power of perception through such

senses as the eye – all have to seek my grace in order to carry on their intercourse.

Be it for the attainment of the knowledge of the Brahman, be it for the praise of the Para-Brahman, be it for the highest contemplation and meditation – all have to seek refuge in me.”⁶³

Visva – Karma is known as Brhaspati and Brahmanaspati just because he is the husband of speech who expresses herself as mantra. In other words, the different categories of mantras do the service of Cosmic Light in his three different forms.⁶⁴

Speech, manifesting itself as mantra, has three different forms, Rk, Yajus and Saman. In its essential whole form speech reflects the supreme person dwelling in Aditya. The mantras of the Rk hymn are the praise of the radiant sphere of Aditya, the Saman of his effulgent light and Yajus of the supreme being within Aditya. This is the nature of Speech.

It has been stated already that, as the absolute spirit is the husband of the goddess of Speech, he is known as Vachaspati or Brhaspati. But this does not mean that there are two different persons or principles described in these mantras. Nor should the masculine and the feminine terms employed in these descriptions be taken in a literal sense to denote any male or female distinction. The mantras स्त्रियः सतीः and अयं स शिङ्क्ते definitely indicate that sex has no meaning in relation to the absolute. The use of masculine and feminine epithets is only a mode of conception and description appropriate to the attribute of the absolute spirit, which is contemplated and described in the particular context.

The mantra स्त्रियः सतीः is interpreted thus: “In the beams of Aditya female and male nature are blended. When they bear in them the waters of the world as a womb bears a child, they express a female characteristic. But when they shower rains upon the world, they are discharging the male function of pouring forth the seminal fluid. When they express their female property, they are marvellously attractive and lovely and

glorious. But when they express their male quality they are tremendously powerful and piercingly brilliant. The essential nature of Aditya cannot be perceived by the physical eye or other external senses. Its secret can be realised only by the great souls who have the inner vision born of spiritual power."

The mantra अयं स शिङ्क्ते also stated the same truth. While explaining this mantra, Sayana relates the following story --

Sakapuni resolved within himself, "I will discover and know the essential nature of all gods or deities." Then there appeared before him a certain deity in whom were embodied bi-sexual characteristics. Sakapuni could not understand the real nature of this deity. He prayed, "Reveal to me thy real nature." At this, the deity indicated the mantra अयं स शिङ्क्ते of the Rk Samhita and declared that it was the self-same deity whose praise was sung in this mantra, that it was in order to praise this deity that the mantra was born. In the text of the mantra occurs the term गौः : which here means Madhyamika speech. The term मायु which also occurs in the mantra denotes Aditya. Thus the mantra blends in itself a bisexual description.⁶⁵

Sakapuni, intoxicated with self-importance, boastfully declared his resolution that he would unravel the mystery of that supreme principle which would be baffling to the noblest souls and which, being infinite, cannot be fully grasped by finite minds however great they may be. It is in order to bring him to his senses that the deity appeared before him with the dual characteristics of double-sexed personality and, by throwing him into a state of confusion and bewilderment, made him realise his own unimportance. He was thus made to realise that it is only by the grace of the supreme principle that it is possible for anyone to understand even an infinitesimal part of the nature of supreme reality. Having now learnt that only through utter humility and earnest and prayerful devotion the seeker could gain the knowledge he sought, Sakapuni fell back upon devout prayer as his only refuge. That is the significance of this episode. Understood in this light, the

digression will be valuable inasmuch as it throws light upon the conditions to be fulfilled if any seeker would attain even a fragmentary knowledge of the supreme spirit.

But the purpose of Sayana's narrative would be lost upon those who would come, on the basis of this story, to the superficial conclusion that there are two deities and one is a god and the other a goddess. It is just to dispel such a delusion that the episode is related. Sayana leaves nothing to chance. He anticipates the objection -- How can we consider the deity to be one, when it has a double-sexed form? And he answers the objection by his detailed and clear comment. Owing to the exigencies of circumstances, the same Supreme Spirit may assume many and diverse forms and some of them may seem to indicate even difference of sex. But the original supreme deity or spirit is the sole ground and abode of all the apparently different deities, as revealed by the Vedic formula एकैव वा महानात्मा देवता, "The same single great soul is the one and the only deity." This truth applies to the present instance too. Difference of sex here does not indicate difference of the deity. There may be difference of form but there is unity of nature and spirit. Such, in brief, is Sayana's answer, which should put the matter beyond all doubt.

Commenting on the mantra स्त्रियः सतीः Sayana says that that very principle which the ignoramus of the world describe as a female deity, the knowing ones, the seers of truth describe as a male deity.⁶⁶ The objection may be raised -- How can that deity be called a male deity which has a female form? Sayana's answer is that such an objection cannot arise in connection with this fundamental reality which has no limitations (upadhis) of any sort whatsoever and which, by its sheer will, can assume any form it pleases.

The Upanishads too describe how the cosmic spirit was at first single. In other words, he was and nothing else was. When he desired to create, he assumed, by his sheer will power, both male and female forms and created the entire universe.

Thus the Brhad-aranyaka says that, in the beginning, the cosmic spirit was single. He did not have a single second thing, beside(s) himself. This state of things gave him no joy. And he willed to create a second thing which would bring him joy. That very instant he assumed a bulk equal to the combined bulk of a male and a female person.⁶⁷ At this stage there was no differentiation of sex or division of forms. In the next stage the Cosmic Person assumed a dual form and transformed himself into two persons, a husband and a wife. It is for this reason that the entire skies are pervaded by the female spirit. The Cosmic Spirit entered into these two persons and, through their union, brought about the creation all the gods and men and other things. Such is the description of genesis by sage Yajnyavalkya, which accounts incidentally for the bifurcation of the creator into male and female forms.

The Prasnopanishad says that Prajapati became desirous to create beings. By his penance he created Prakrti, the female principle and Prana, the male principle. And by the union of this pair, he caused the multiplication of creatures.⁶⁸

The Svetasvatara praises the supreme spirit thus: "Thou of Cosmic form also exist in male and female form – both as man and woman and as boy and girl."⁶⁹

The Yaksha episode in the Kena also confirms the accounts stated above. A certain Yaksha appeared before the gods. Mysterious was his personality. At first Agni and others tried to understand who and what he was, but they could make nothing of him. Then all the gods sent Indra to the Yaksha. Indra drew near the strange being. Then he saw in the heavens a most fascinating and gorgeously radiant womanly form. On enquiry and with her help, he understood and realised the real Brahman.

All these Upanishadic passages are elaborations of the truth embodied in the Rk Samhita hymns स्त्रियः सतीः and अयं स शिङ्क्ते.

The relation between Purusha and Virat described in the Rg and other Vedic passages also reveals what has been set

forth above, namely that the cosmic spirit manifests itself sometimes as a male and sometimes as a female deity. And it is as the result of their union that the creation of the worlds is said to take place.

“From him was born Virat; Virat is the first offspring of Purusha”, says the Purusha Sukta. This statement reveals that the relation between Purusha and Virat is one between the progenitor and his progeny. Generally, the Rk Samhita (except in one or two passages,) employs the term ‘Virat’ in the feminine gender. The Atharva Veda even establishes identity between Virat and Vak (the goddess of speech). ‘Vagvirat’, ‘Speech is Virat’ is the Atharva declaration. Similarly, in the Atharvaveda, the Virat metre is considered to have great virtue. That is why this metre is identified with speech itself.

In his commentary, Sayana justifies the attribute Virat to the supreme being. “Various and diverse things (विविधानि राजन्ते) i.e. all the worlds and their innumerable beings) shine in him”; or alternatively, “he shines in diverse ways and forms.” (X. 90.5) For this reason, according to the commentator, it is meet to describe the cosmic spirit as Virat. It is interesting to observe that the goddess of speech is also described in a similar manner. Sarasvati, the goddess of speech shines in many ways and forms, according to the Samhita⁷⁰ and the comments thereon. This fact also establishes identity between Purusha and speech, Vak, who is a female deity.

It is stated in the Samhita that Prajapati, the father, cohabited with his daughter and poured forth the seminal fluid. Thus took place the birth of Brahma.⁷¹ Sayana, in his comment, does not specify the identity of the daughter referred to in the text. Ushas, Vak and other similar possibilities may be mentioned. In any case, the point to be noted is that the act of procreation by Prajapati is said to have occurred by his using the daughter herself as his wife and by union with her. Referring to this very matter, the Taittiriya Samhita says that Prajapati observed

Virat and by union with her he begot all the creatures of the past and the future (III, 3, 5, 2.) Virat is not here identified.

In certain passages, the Visvakarma is said to have done the act of procreation through union with Vak.

Thus whatever meaning may be attached to the term Virat, the fact that clearly emerges, when divested of all the metaphor and symbolism, is that the Creator himself entered into something created by himself and thus he expressed himself and expanded himself in the form of the Cosmos.

The Brhad-aranyaka says that, if Indra is the supreme being, his wife is none other than Virat. Indra shines in the left eye. And for both these beings, the place of union is the sky of the heart (IV, 2, 3).

In the same manner, the Rk Samhita says that Daksha was born of Aditi and Aditi was born of Daksha (X, 72, 4). This passage is perhaps the clearest in establishing the identity between the male and the female manifestations of the cosmic spirit. For it makes their parent offspring relationship a mutual thing. In other words, Daksha and Aditi are both emanations of one aspect of the same supreme being. The symbolic sex differentiation is not indicative of a difference in deities.

The mantra "Vrshabhascha Dhenuh", (X, 5) "The bull is the cow too" is another Rk Samhita passage which elucidates the very same principle as has been discussed in the foregoing. There are other passages too bearing on this subject.

Vak is part of Aditya and resides in him. She has two forms, one before creation and the other after. Before creation, Vak has the form Trayi, which is the form assumed by Aditya's will. After this creation occurs. And then Vak assumes the form of the division and classification of forms and the corresponding division and classification of names, which are processes that must go hand in hand. पतङ्गो वाचं मनसा बिभर्ति and other statements of the Rk Samhita describe these two states and transformations of Vak.⁷²

Just as Aditya, who is the Cosmic Light, has many attributes like Prajapati, Brhaspati, Vachaspati, Mayu, Gandharva, Sarasvan and so on, the Goddess of Speech too has many attributes like Paviravi Kanya, Virapatni, Madhyamika Vak, Gandharvi, Gauri, Dhenuh, Sarasvati and so on. All these attributes of Vak reveal the relation between Vak and Yajna. अग्निर्गन्धर्वी पथ्यामृतस्याग्नेः etc. and other mantras emphasise the relationship between sacrificial fire, sacrifice and speech.

Just as sacrifice taking the form of cosmic creation needs the help of speech, even so, the knowledge of the real import of sacrifice is necessary to understand properly,⁷³ the nature of speech. (उपह्वये सुदुवां) (I, 164, 26), “(हिङ्गवती)” (गौरमीमेदनु) “(अपश्ये गोपां)”⁷⁴ and other mantras reveal the relation between sacrifice and speech. All these are mantras of the Pravargya group, relating to sacrifice. The deity addressed in all these hymns is Aditya. The hymns declare the merit of the Pravargya sacrifices by pointing out that anyone who understands the principle embodied in them also understands the secret of Aditya, becomes one with its cosmic light and thus himself becomes a light.

The Para-Brahman, who is the Prime Cause of all things, (since he is the cause of the cosmic wheel itself which is responsible for all the cyclic phenomena of the universe starting with creation) is firmly established in sacrifice. Any person who does not understand the significance of sacrifice and who does not follow the course of the cosmic wheel but tries wilfully to follow his own way is a great sinner.⁷⁵

But the faith that has to be reposed in Yajna or sacrifice should not be mere blind faith. It should have the power to comprehend spiritual truths. It should be capable of understanding the relation between the Brahman and the Principle of sacrifice, which is the central reality of the universe. A performer of sacrifice, who has such faith born of and backed up by spiritual insight and knowledge, establishes an identity between himself and sacrifice. All the cosmic phenomena

initiated and carried on by the Para-Brahman in the form of Prajapati are, he understands, embedded in the principle of sacrifice. And he actively and consciously participates in and co-operates with the movement of the cosmic wheel.

The individual sacrifices performed by men as described in the Upanishads are the reflection of the cosmic sacrifice performed by the creator of the universe who is without beginning and end. Nor can there be said to be any beginning or end to the Creator's cosmic sacrifice. It is an eternal activity as the result of which the acts of creation, maintenance and dissolution also occur eternally. But as each individual act of creation is the fruit and fulfilment of a particular act of sacrifice, it is necessary to indicate every such sacrifice in terms of the dimensions of space and time. Samvatsara is the dimension for the interval which takes the form of time. Just as Vasanta (spring), Grishma (summer), and Sarat (autumn) are all organic parts of Samvatsara or the year, even so the offering of ghee and samit and havis (different kinds of oblation) are the symbolic parts of the act of sacrifice.

The Cosmic spirit, Visvakarma who is denoted by such terms as Prajapati, Purusha and so on offers himself as the oblation (as he has done again and again before) in every one of his cosmic sacrifices and, through union with sacrifice which is a female spirit, he begets all beings in the universe.

From the gods and the demons (Asuras) down to the minutest atomic particle of dust, everything is the fruit of this cosmic sacrifice done by the Creator. The Performer of the sacrifice manifests himself in three forms so that there may be said to be three performers. These are Prajapati, earthly fire (Parthivagni) and the human sacrificer. The performance of all three of them has to be in conformity with the same law. Man, at the time of his particular sacrifice, must understand the principle underlying Sacrifice and observe it strictly. And in this, Agni himself is his model, the ideal for him to emulate and copy. It is for this reason that the Rk hymns pronounce

the prayer अग्ने नय etc., "O thou, be thou our guide and lead us etc." Such mantras indicate the role of Agni as the leader of men on the right path, that is, the path of sacrifice rightly done.⁷⁶

If the human sacrificer realises the essential principle and significance of sacrifice and performs it in the prescribed form he becomes, as the hymns declare, a person of the same dimensions as the supreme spirit. In other words, man, who may be said to be almost a microscopic entity in consequence of his manifold limitations, becomes freed from all such limitations and his spirit expands evermore. This type of self-expansion is the essential purpose of sacrifice.

CHAPTER III

The End of Human Life

परिचिन्मर्तो द्रविणं समन्यादृतस्य पथा नमसा विवासेत् ।

उत स्वेन क्रतुना सं वदेत श्रेयांसं दक्षं मनसा जगृभ्यात् । (X,31,2)

Man must earn wealth by all right means. He must live a pure life, pursuing the path of Rta, the cosmic Law. He must spend all the wealth he earns in acts of sacrifice. He must employ himself in the adoration and worship of the Lord. He must become absorbed in meditation based upon and backed up by the knowledge of the Lord. Through such meditation he must realise and attain the omnipresent and omnipotent Lord. This is the end of human life.

The end to be attained by man has a two-fold aspect.¹ Firstly, it takes the form of material wealth, not as an end in itself, but as a means to a fuller and richer life. Secondly, it consists of spiritual wealth which alone can lead to the realisation of cosmic harmony.

The attainment of both these aims needs and implies the performance of noble deeds. Noble action and noble living are interdependent. Just as the richness of life depends on right action, even so, right action itself depends on the possession of material wealth and of cheerfulness and peace of mind. Action is important, but physical and mental health and well-being are no less important; for they are the conditions for the doing of right action.

It is not everyone that has the right to a full, rich life. One must be worthy of such life before one can live such life. Man must have faith in the cosmic law and he must conform

to it in his individual life. Only those have the right to a rich and abundant life, who are able to live truthful, upright, moral lives. Material happiness and well-being, physical as well as mental health, peace and cheerfulness of mind, all these are to be gained only by the grace of God. But in order to gain the grace of God, the only way for man is self-effort, personal endeavour. God's grace does not drop upon man's lap; he has to earn it, to attain it by right effort. In other words, man's salvation is in his own hands. Effort gains grace, which brings happiness and joy.

"The gods seek to befriend the man of sincere, upright action. We are people leading a straight life and the performers of Yajna or sacrifice. May, therefore, the magnanimous mercy of the gods be upon us: May they extend our span of life as the fruit of our upright living."²

"The adorable Savita confers abundance of food and worldly goods only on him who strictly adheres to the path of Rta, the cosmic law and performs noble actions."³

"The gods protect from all dangers and calamities that man who lives a straight, upright life."⁴

Such statements of the Rk Samhita stress the firmly established and inseparable relation that exists between uprightness and righteousness of living and divine grace.

To him who has firm faith in the cosmic law truthful and honest living will be quite natural and needs no effort. The message of the Rk Samhita is this: 'We must repose firm faith in the decree of Indra, whose fame and glory are proclaimed and carried far and wide by all the seven rivers like the Ganga; whose glorious effulgence in his Aditya form is received and borne by earth and heaven; and in conformity with whose law the Sun and the Moon are always performing their revolutionary cycles.' Faith in the cosmic law is the only source of uprightness in personal and practical life. Strict conformity to the cosmic law is the root of all prosperity. When such life is lived,

“The Lord in the form of Vayu showers upon us the sweet fruits of good deeds. Rivers give their sweet and beneficial waters. The very earth and heaven unite to promote our welfare and happiness.”⁵ Apart from this, the world of the upright man will not be a narrow, confined world, but a large and ever-expanding world. “The Adityas spread their radiant light over all the three worlds for the sake of that man who strictly pursues the path of Rta, the cosmic law. They are ever vigilant to promote his happiness. For the sake of the doer of good deeds they are always mindfully employed in discharging the benevolent duties unremittingly, without so much as winking an eye-lid (in sleep).”⁶

“O ye Indra and Vishnu,” says a hymn of the Rk Samhita, “Noble is your acceptance of the Soma drink at our hands and the fruit of your pleasure at our offering is your gracious actions for our well-being and happiness. For our betterment and upliftment ye have done no less than enlarging the very frontiers of earth and heaven.”⁷ Statements of this kind reveal that immeasurable is the power for good acquired by righteous action; and that the gods will stint nothing in conferring boons on the person who, through such action, proves himself a firm adherent of Rta, the cosmic law. For what the Rk prayer calls widening the very frontiers of earth and heaven for the benefit of such a man evidently means that, for the righteous person, there is nothing in earth or heaven which is not accessible.

To the firm adherent of Rta, the happiness and prosperity that accrue from noble deeds are as infinite as they are certain. On the other hand, to the unrighteous person, one that fails to do his duties on, worse still, violates the cosmic law through evil doings, punishment is as dire as it is certain. He who does not do sacrifices and lives a selfish life will lose all his wealth and all his virtue. He will lose all, his ruin will be complete. The hymns declare, “Indra, who is the doer of (appointed) duties, seizes and takes away all the wealth of him who fails to do (right) action (*i.e.* his prescribed duties).”⁸

“Indra, prompted by the prayers and praises of such as perform sacrifices, utterly destroys those that will not perform sacrifices themselves but obstruct the performance of such sacrifices by causing trouble and injury to the sacrificers.”⁹

“He who will not spend his wealth in charity, though he has much wealth, will surely lose all his wealth.”¹⁰

The man who seeks divine grace vows that he will be free from such sins as failure to do the prescribed duties. His prayer is, “I who am sinless and will remain sinless proffer my worship to Varuna. May Varuna confer upon me all wealth.”¹¹

“Sincere and straight have I been in rendering my duties to Agni and other gods, and free from sin have I remained. May I be so fortunate as to gain the protection of all the gods.”¹²

Thus the seeker of divine grace bases his claim upon his sinlessness and purity of character.

Sin is of two kinds, that which is committed by oneself and that which may occur through circumstances. It is possible to get rid of the first kind by personal endeavour. He who may do wrong may also set it right. But the second kind cannot be got rid of purely by self-effort. Divine grace is necessary here. For instance, poverty and the various sufferings that come in its train cannot be overcome entirely by personal effort. But, unless these are overcome, one can have neither peace nor happiness in life. And the performance of noble deeds becomes terribly hard, if not impossible. If man is to be man in the true sense, if he has to live a cultured life and to do in full measure his prescribed duties, he must be free from such obstacles as poverty and disease. It is for these reasons that, in the hymns of the Rk Samhita, there are such outpourings as the following:

“O thou Agni, free us from our hunger. Destroy all our sins.”

“O thou Indra, grant us cattle wealth and, by so doing, save us from the hunger that springs from poverty and from the sins that poverty will drive us into.”

“O thou Surya, by thy radiance thou destroyest the darkness of the world and lightest up the whole world. By that same radiance destroy our want and all our ailments and diseases.”¹³

In these passages there is no doubt an expression of full and firm faith in the efficacy of prayer but there is a greater emphasis laid on personal effort both to gain good and to get rid of evil. Wealth and welfare, either in a material or in a spiritual sense, do not drop from the heavens as the fruit of mere prayer. Only through the persistent and unbroken effort of man can he gain earthly good or heavenly grace. That is the clear message of the Vedic seers.

For the gaining of human ends by self-effort there are two dangerous enemies, sleep and self-importance and the boastfulness resulting therefrom. Sleep here means sloth, all forms of laziness. The other evil, called ‘jalpi’ (lit idle or windy prattle) implies all forms of vain talk springing from over-valuation of oneself. Hence goes forth the prayer, “May sleep and garrulous braggartism not envelop us: Let us not fall a prey to them.”¹⁴ For the virtues of freedom from slackness and sloth as well as the spirit of activity and alertness, Agni and other gods are themselves the ideals to copy.

“The rays of Agni are eternally vigilant. They are engaged in the task of protecting the world from danger. They are never tired in discharging their duty. All this is due to the vigilant spirit of Agni.”¹⁵ Similarly, the ten quarters and Varuna and all the other gods are described as performing their function of protecting the worlds without winking their eye-lid.

Man is thus highly indebted to the gods for all his welfare and for his very safe existence. And he must discharge this debt by doing meritorious deeds in a spirit of prayerful devotion and earnestness. “Without earnest endeavour taking shape

in good action one cannot gain the good-will or the friendship of the gods.”¹⁶ Though the Rbhus are only men, they, by their irresistible will to do noble deeds and as the fruit of their penances, gained the friendship of the gods and themselves attained divinity. To do good deeds under the guidance and leadership of the Rbhus and the Angirasas is the way to attain all wealth and happiness. Hence the following expression of gratitude is embodied in one of the hymns—” Salutations and thanks to all our ancestors, both those who were born at the very time of creation and others, who are our guides (to right conduct).”¹⁷ The Angirasas who revealed to the world the nature of Agni as truth embodied and who taught the world the significance and mode of sacrifice are the foremost among the guides and leaders of men.¹⁸ It is only those men that follow their foot-steps and adhere to the path that was shown to them and engage themselves in acts of sacrifice who deserve true wealth. Happiness and well-being, here and hereafter, is the fruit of this hard and persistent endeavour.

The attainment of material goods is thus very important. But great stress is laid on the mode of attaining it. Right ends cannot be gained by wrong means. The means adopted to gain wealth must be morally pure and such as to assure peace of mind. In order to gain a great deal of wealth through the quickest means, if a person falls a prey to vices like gambling, such a person will have to suffer a whole chain of evil consequences.

The Rk Samhita tells the story of a man who tried to get rich through dicing and describes the misfortunes that followed and thus it points the moral. The dicer is made to relate his story in a graphic manner:

“The die which is the instrument of dicing has an irresistible attraction. It spurs me to gambling.”

“Dear is my wife’s love for me. All my manifold wrongs she forgets. Knowing that all my friends and companions are criminal, she still treats them with respect in order not to hurt

my feelings. And such is the fierce fascination of the die that it makes me treat such a wife with contempt and neglect her.¹⁹

“If I persist in this evil art, even, this noble wife of mine will be tired of me. My mother-in-law will begin to loathe me. Not a single person will be left, who would wish for or promote my happiness. Nor shall there be any joy left for me. For the fault of becoming my wife, my faithful wife too will have to bear many insults and shames. In such a situation, my very parents and brothers and sisters let down and forsake the wife of such a gambler as myself. Now and then, a fit of repentance may come over me, but I am sure the die will tempt me again. A hardened dicer like me will forget all (decency, dignity, duty) and plunges again into gaming and will soon be utterly ruined. With no one in the world to pity or mind him, he becomes a homeless wanderer. And he will thus be the cause of agony and anguish especially to his mother and his wife.”²⁰

Then the dicer makes an exhortation to all gamesters to take a warning from his example and give up their vice in time: “O thou dicer, do thou pay heed to my advice. Do not ruin thyself by persisting in the vice of dicing. Take to tilling of land. Earn wealth by making hard effort and cultivating land. That wealth will surely give thee joy and happiness. Cultivation will bring to thee abundance of gold and other riches. Such wealth will increase evermore the joy of thy wife and promote in increasing measure thy conjugal felicity. All manner of happiness, all types of blessings will accrue to thee. This is the noble lesson taught me by Savita himself.”²¹ That is the lofty note on which this marvellous story concludes. This message of the Rk Samhita, revealed through the gamester who is but a mouth piece for the Vedic seer, has a comprehensive import. It forbids all foul means. The significance of the story is, therefore, the great truth that good ends can be gained only by good means, and the stern warning that foul means are bound to result in total ruin.

The possession of mere worldly goods cannot bring happiness even in the worldly sense. What man first needs is health. "May the supreme lord Vayu grant us health, longevity and wealth! May he increase our life-span!" is a prayer addressed to Iswara who, in this context, is described as Sambhu the giver of happiness (lit – what is auspicious) and Mayobhu, the giver of joy.²²

But life is a mixture of joys and sorrows. No one can run away from painful and distressing situations which inevitably occur. In order to face such situations, courage and firmness are necessary. "Life is a river full of rocks. We must go forward at every step without losing heart, overcoming all unpleasant and inauspicious situations and gathering around us such things and influences as make for happiness."²³ But in order to overcome difficulties and advance through life, we need enlightenment that grows greater and richer with the years.²⁴ If we are successful in facing our hardships and misfortunes and if we go onward courageously, we are sure to gain the help of Indra, the lord of all worlds.

"O ye brave spirits, march onward. Win ye victories. Indra will be your champion and protector." Such spirited appeals are found in the Rk Samhita from start to finish.²⁵ In other words, it is evident that success and victory belong only to those who have physical might as well as courage and firmness to overcome all difficulties and dangers and make progress in life.

"May our arms be terror-striking (to evil persons)! सुवीर्यस्य पतयः स्याम" Let us become the possessors of proper courage." नृभिर्नृवन्तः स्याम "May we become manly among men! मा भै म...." "May we, under your mighty championship, dread nothing and may we not grow faint or weary!" Statements such as these express the suppliants' lofty aspiration after a heroic life. "O, thou Indra, thou art the conqueror of all (evil) forces and thou art invincible. Being under thy protection, we have no fear of anything." This is the expression

of faith the fearless person utters in Samhita. Possessing such faith, to live a dauntless, free, full and rich life — that is the ideal of earthly felicity, as described in the Rk Samhita.

Well-earned wealth and good progeny are not to be desired purely for the sake of earthly happiness. They must be the means to the realisation of the supreme end of human life. Realising the secret of cosmic sacrifice, if a man performs individual sacrifices, he can attain the highest goal.

Cosmic sacrifice is inspired and initiated by Visva Karma. It is an eternal activity. It is this cosmic sacrifice that the Bhagavad-Gita calls Brahma-chakra. Man must pursue the path of this cosmic wheel. The supreme being, being perfect, has perfect content; he has no want. Yet he is eternally engaged in action for the well-being of the world. In the same manner, man must be ever busy, doing noble action for the well-being of the world. Personal interest cannot be ignored altogether in earthly life. But there is a nobler interest which must increasingly take the place of self-interest until the two become identical. A life which does not occupy itself with the good of the world is a sinful life.²⁶ Enjoyment, where there is no sacrifice, leads to a waste of oneself. Wealth that is well spent in charity for the welfare of others in a spirit of self-sacrifice is not lost. And the wealth of him who does not spend his wealth in charity in a spirit of sacrifice does not last. Such a man has no happiness either.²⁷

Charity is of two kinds and those that deserve, that are qualified to receive it are also of two kinds. One kind of charity or giving takes the form of Yajna, sacrifice, and the recipients of this are the gods. And the other form of charity or giving is the giving of food to hungry ones. One who has abundance of food, if does not do these two kinds of charity but is lost in selfish enjoyment, is a living corpse. Such a life is a life of sin. One who lives entirely for his own pleasures is indeed a thief. For such a life is impossible without gaining things by foul means and without hoarding things; and hoarding

means possessing what is not needed by oneself, what is superfluous to oneself. And this superfluous thing is what is needed by others. So a man cannot have excess unless he has deprived his neighbour of what is sheer necessity for him. There can be no lighter title for such a man than that of thief or robber. For to deprive others of what is needed by them through cunning and by secret means is theft. And to do this by open means of violence is robbery. Thus trying to gain and gather things not needed by oneself but of vital need to others is, to put it in the mildest terms, either theft or robbery, accompanied in varying degrees by other crimes and sins.²⁸

The enrichment of individual life should be the means to domestic happiness. The earthly happiness desired and sought by the Vedic seers is virtuous and happy conjugal life and the getting heroic sons ever engaged in doing good deeds. Nowhere except in the Rk Samhita can one find the upholding of an ideal family life, based upon conjugal happiness, virtuous and pure, auspicious, the very centre and source of peace and joy.

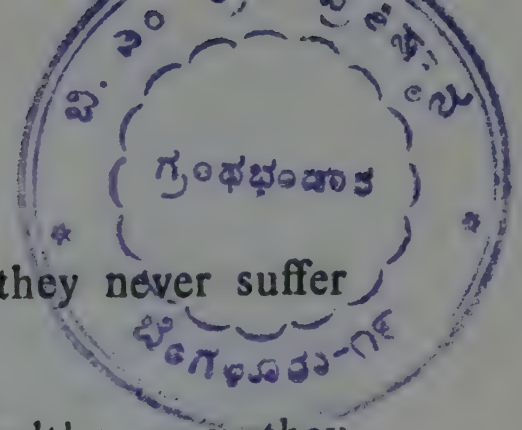
The ideal of conjugal felicity is depicted in the perfect harmony revealed in the married life of Surya and Pushan. For marital happiness the first step is mutual love between husband and wife. In the story of Surya and Pushan occurs the statement, "He (the father) gave her in marriage to that very person whom Surya desired to have for her husband." This statement emphasises that the base of happy married life is true love between man and wife. And true love does not depend solely upon physical beauty. It must go beyond and become a union of hearts. This is revealed in the prayer, "May Matarisvan be gracious enough to bring about a commingling between your two hearts!"²⁹ The statement, "I am the Saman and thou the Rk; I am heaven and thou art the earth" also describes the supreme importance of congenial relationship between the married couple in order that their partnership may be happy and successful.

As long as earthly life lasts, husband and wife are both responsible for their mutual happiness. The wife is the queen

of the husband's household. All the rest must be under her Government. "The wife is the home."³⁰ A home without a wife is empty and desolate. There can be no greater happiness on earth than for the husband to live with his wife, the very giver of domestic bliss, never separated from her, and to enjoy the pleasure of good children and grand-children.³¹ It is the wife who is the bringer of all good fortune to the husband's home. She is the cause of all the happiness of the family. And so, at the sacred ceremony of marriage, the new husband pronounces the mantra, "It is for my good fortune that I seek thy hand in marriage. I am fortunate in gaining thee for my wife by clasping thee by the hand. Thou that art full of all that is auspicious, enter thou my home."³² And from the moment this relationship is sealed by the symbolic hand-clasp, indicative of the union of the two, body, mind and soul, his very home is, for the husband, heaven on earth.

To enjoy all the pleasure and happiness which earthly life can give – that is indeed the aim and purpose of married life. But the Rk Samhita repeatedly sounds the warning that such life should not begin and end with mere personal enjoyment of comforts and luxuries. While the hymns pronounce on the married couple the benediction that they may have abundance of food, of gold and ornaments to bedeck themselves, of the joy of begetting good children and grand-children, it is also enjoined upon them that they should use all this wealth in a virtuous and holy manner. Since the entire universe is replete with sacrifice, the individual life which should conform to and fall in line with it should employ itself in acts of worthy sacrifice. If wealth is spent in doing acts of sacrifice, it undoubtedly brings with it its own good fruit.³³ To him that, while enjoying the happiness of family life, performs in the prescribed manner acts of sacrifice together with his worthy wife, his virtuous living will increase evermore his wealth and domestic bliss.

"O ye gods, may all goods and accessories of sacrifice increase evermore in the home of this couple who, in a holy



spirit, proffer oblations at the sacrifice! May they never suffer from want of food!”

“May this couple have abundance of wealth; may they have many children and grand-children; may they live a long life, their person bedecked with splendid ornaments; and may their progeny grow with unbroken continuity!”³⁴

Such benedictions stress the inseparable relation that exists between domestic happiness and the performance of acts of sacrifice.

The maintenance of an unbroken line is the culmination and fulfilment of married life. But what this progeny should be like is also described in detail in the Rk mantras. One mantra gives the assurance: “The sacrificer who offers oblations at the sacrificial fire will have a worthy son who is well versed in all practical affairs; who is skilled in the management of the household; who is regular in the performance of the Darsapurna and other prescribed sacrifices; who, by virtue of his knowledge of all sciences, is an ornament to a learned assembly; and who will make his father’s name well known and be a credit to him.” The same mantra uses the following epithets to describe the characteristics of a noble and worthy son — Karmanya (कर्मण्य), Sadanya (सादन्य), Vidathya (विदथ्य), Sabheya (सभेय), Pitr-sravana (पितृश्रवण) and so on.³⁵

2

Man’s desire in this life is to acquire material goods like food, gold, ornaments and so on; to enjoy a congenial and happy married life; to beget worthy children; and to live a long span of life, enjoying all these blessings. And even with such good fortune, a long life will be worth living only if its possessor will, instead of being lost in the enjoyment of worldly pleasures, constantly endeavour to discover and realise cosmic truth and cosmic beauty. The whole theme of the Rk Samhita is to drive

home this truth. That the supreme end of man's life is not the enjoyment of worldly goods but the attainment of spiritual perfection. "O thou Surya, may we, by thy grace, have loving hearts and a lofty vision, may we have worthy off-spring and all manner of wealth, may we be free from ailments and sins ! Do thou grant us a long span of life and the power to see thee and proffer thee our adoration for evermore." This prayer leaves no doubt that a refined life is not mere material prosperity or physical enjoyment. To sing the praise of the Lord's divine glory; to see him reflected in the sun's disc; to contemplate his perfect beauty and radiance – to live in this wise is to live a life of refinement. This is the meaning of a spiritual life.

Prayer for longevity may be addressed to Surya or other deities, but the purpose is always the same, namely, the desire to observe and contemplate the rising Aditya, which in this context means the Sun. In the Rk Samhita, the belief finds repeated expression, that there can be no loftier ideal than the sight and contemplation of the Sun's disc, the very symbol and reflection of truth as well as beauty. The hymns give voice to a repeated prayer for the good fortune of enjoying evermore the spectacle of the sun who shines in the heavens, who is tremendously radiant and who is the giver of life and happiness to all the world.³⁶

Two ways are mentioned for the contemplation of the vision of Aditya. One is to take delight in the manifold and varied manifestations of the Lord in the phenomenal world. And the other is the realisation of the unity underlying all this diversity, of the harmonising and unifying cosmic spirit in all the endless forms in which it expresses itself. "O thou Surya, make our senses strong and our eyes bright so that we may be able to gain the right knowledge of the oneness of the cosmic reality and the diversity of its forms in the world."

Aditya is likened to a tree. It is the Tree of Light. In the night time, Aditya's rays enter into the tree (and are absorbed into it and so become invisible). And at dawn, they (emerge

from it) and spread out, and spread far out, to all the worlds and fill all the worlds with his radiance. Luscious and juicy is the fruit attained through the adoration of Aditya and it sustains all the worlds. The seers believe that this fruit is the noblest of all to be sought and attained. He who does not, through adoration and worship, try to realise Aditya, the Lord and Protector of the three worlds cannot gain this most desirable fruit.³⁷ Hymns of the Rk Samhita which speak in this strain establish identity between Aditya and the supreme spirit. The term 'to know', in the statement यः पितरं न वेद, 'He who does not know the father', emphasises the need and importance of knowledge to the seeker of reality -- knowledge of that principle which is the very basis and object of his meditation and adoration. The supreme ecstasy which can be attained through the taste of the fruit of such meditation and adoration can be gained nowhere else and through nothing else.³⁸

Aditya has two aspects, one which can be perceived and realised by common observation, by ordinary persons in the world, by no higher power than that of the external senses, and the other aspect is one which cannot be so perceived and realised. The solar disc which, subject to the law of time, performs its cyclic revolutions can be easily perceived through ordinary observation. But that supreme person of golden glory, dwelling within Aditya, who is beyond all limitations of time and space and to whose regulation the movement of time itself is subject, cannot be perceived through ordinary observation, through mere physical sight. For this divine vision meditation and penance are the only means. From him who can see only with his physical eye is hidden that supreme being who is within the Sun, though the Sun himself may be right before him.³⁹ That Light divine from which have sprung all existences -- past, present and future --, that Primeval Light which all the Panchajanas like gods and men adore and serve, that Light supernal is a thing obscure and secret.⁴⁰

If Indra's effulgent form, most famed of all things, is yet not perceptible, it is because man himself turns away from the

supreme being.⁴¹ The hymns frequently give expression to the seeker's longing for this divine vision, his profound pain that this vision is yet unattained, his keen anguish that the highest knowledge is still beyond his reach. "The transcendental reality and I are not different entities. But I have failed to ponder over and try to know whether my self is that very Brahman who pervades the whole universe. That is why I am enveloped by utter ignorance, enmeshed by all worldly trivialities, and I wander aimlessly about this world, my mind diverted from the reality within to the unreality without. The moment the knowledge of the Para-Brahman, which is the Truth of all truths, is vouchsafed to me, that very moment I will realise the supreme Truth that I am the Brahman, अहं ब्रह्मास्मि."⁴² There are abundant instances in the hymns of such rueful, penitent self-reproaches. The essence of repentance is the realisation of one's wrong-doing, one's omissions and commissions and the consequent self-abasement and self-deprecation.⁴³ But this is only the negative side, there is an unconquainable, irresistible longing for the knowledge of the transcendental reality. But the seeker knows that this highest of all desirable things is just the thing which is beyond the grasp or even the realisation of the gods themselves. Hence he knows that such a little intellect as his own, and even that an utterly unripe one, cannot hope ever to know, by its own unaided effort, the highest of all realities. And in order to know it at any cost, such a restlessly longing, striving seeker calls to his aid the gracious support of those who have attained that realisation, of the seers.⁴⁴

Two reasons are stated for the fact that beings who are created by the Lord are not able to realise His supreme glory. For one thing, these creatures do not know that their very birth and existence are due to the Lord. And owing to ignorance, they are filled with selfishness and egoism and, in consequence, are overwhelmed by the temptation for sensual indulgence and material pleasures. Hence they have not the fitness to realise the Lord. Befogged by their colossal ignorance, they are drunk with the feeling that they are all-knowing.

These are the unseeing ones; for endowed with sight and understanding, they are yet blind, physically as well as mentally. They are doomed to the depths of abysmal ignorance.⁴⁵

Secondly, the supreme being transcends everything. He is not accessible to such crude physical instruments as the senses. He is beyond hearing, beyond touch and grasp. He is formless. Even the greatest seers are able to realise but a part, an infinitesimal part of his inconceivable, sublime nature. Full realisation of the supreme being is impossible for anyone but the supreme being himself.

Moreover, faith alone is not enough for the realisation of the supreme spirit. Power of intellect and power of spiritual meditation are both necessary. There is no guarantee that different individuals have all manner of powers. It is also far from certain that, even those rare individuals who are endowed with a variety of powers, all their diverse gifts are co-ordinated and blended in the same manner. All the disciples of the same spiritual preceptor may look alike in such external things as bodily form and structure. All may have eyes and ears. Yet in their receptivity, each is different from the rest. This is because of the differences of their intellectual grasp.⁴⁶ That intellect which cannot penetrate the deepest secrets cannot completely comprehend what is taught. People of this sort can certainly not join the fold of those rare seers who have the power of spiritual contemplation and meditation. It may be possible either from the scriptures or from the right kind of preceptor to get an answer to the question -- what is the nature of the supreme, transcendental reality? This, if the inquirer has intellectual understanding, may lead to knowledge in the mental sense. But it would be a great mistake to imagine that this sort of knowledge is complete knowledge. Hearing is only the first step. Pondering over what is heard and comprehending it intellectually is the next step. But it is not the final step. Spiritual contemplation and meditation leading to communion with the supreme being -- that is the important step for supreme knowledge or realisation.⁴⁷

External means, of whatever sort, can but enhance the individual's powers; they cannot be the principal factors leading to the realisation of the Light Divine. In order to understand the sublime divinity of the cosmic poet and the riddle of the universe, which is his poem, the human individual must have an element of that poetic nature. Although all the gods endeavoured to discover the supernal nature of the supreme soul, it was only Indra who was able to attain success in the endeavour. It is just because he was able to gain this direct vision that he is called Indra.⁴⁸ Only that person who shares with the Divine Poet the poetic heart, that can possess this power of Indra to see that divine blaze of glory face to face.

The term 'Vijnana', as defined in the Sathapatha Brahmana, means super-knowledge. This knowledge is bliss, which is due to the fact that it is the highest knowledge, the knowledge of the final supreme Truth. It is attainable only by gods. If men too have the power to attain it, they too may be classed with gods. To discover and unravel the deepest secret and eulogise its sublime nature and value is a function human poets have in common with the gods. A poet is one who has the power and blessedness to gain the vision of the transcendental spirit.⁴⁹

On many occasions, Sayana uses the term 'Deva' or god as a synonym for the term 'poet'. This is because he who is able to gain even a glimpse of absolute reality is indeed gifted with divine vision, though he may be but a mortal. Physically, he has only two eyes, but his inner spiritual vision is equivalent to a thousand eyes. It is for this reason that the Rk Samhita exalts the poet's superhuman power in these words: "Poets have a thousand eyes. They are seers gifted with transcendental vision. They look after and watch over Surya or Aditya himself."⁵⁰ Just because they have such power, "Poets, with their transcendental vision, know the supreme spirit within Aditya and they seek to achieve oneness with it."⁵¹ "Poets gain entry into the path of Rta and, wearing secret names (*i.e.* preferring

anonymity to fame), seek only to unfold to the world the working of Rta.⁵²

Poets also have such titles as Rshi and Suri just because, possessing supersensual understanding and insight, they have become seers.⁵³

The Poet, then, has a mellowed mind and a hallowed heart. Possessing all Yogic powers like restraint (यम) and constraint (नियम) and focussing and fixing his mind on the innermost centre of his heart, he seeks, with his perfected insight the supreme soul who lives in the heart of the sun and is the cause of creation, existence and dissolution. And by this vision he gains bliss. Through communion with the Para-Brahman manifesting himself as Aditya, such a poet attains union itself with the Para-Brahman.⁵⁴ Vamadeva and other sages are instances in point. All those that reach the conviction "I am the Brahman", achieve union with all beings and existences in the world. It is this conviction of his oneness with all things that made the sage Vamadeva declare, "I am Manu, I am Surya, I am indeed everything that has any recognisable form."⁵⁵ It is this realisation of one's identity with all things through the realisation of the oneness of all things in the world that is the cause and source of the highest bliss. He who adores and serves, through meditation and other modes, the supreme spirit attains and enjoys the fruit borne by the tree of Aditya, the sweetest and most delicious of all fruits, the one supreme fruit to be attained and tasted by every sensible being.⁵⁶

To claim to have realised the Light Divine without the spiritual realisation that "all this (the whole universe) is the abode of the Lord" (ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वम्) is a vain, absurd claim. Futile too is the hope ever to know in its entirety the nature of the supreme being. If, however, there is anyone who has attained the decisive knowledge of the cause of the universe or the forms which it may assume, then that person is also fit to bear the title of Iswara or the Lord.⁵⁷ But, for this most

desirable culmination and fulfilment too, what is indispensable is the grace of the Lord himself. Hence it is that the hymns stress that, besides meditation and knowledge, the grace of the Lord is an indispensable requisite for the attainment of supreme bliss. In a variety of ways they express the prayer to the Lord to confer the boon of a life that is wholly devoted to the unswerving pursuit of Rta and to singing the praise of the Lord, and is filled with the ecstasy born of supreme realisation. There are a good many mantras praying for the Lord's grace like --

तव व्रते सुभगासः स्याम

अग्ने नय सुपथा राये अस्मान्

जीवा ज्योतिरशीमहि

विश्वदात्री सुमनसः स्याम चक्षुर्नो धेहि चक्षुषे

But there is no mantra which has the sanctity and auspiciousness of Gayatri, addressed to Savita.

The mantra beginning "Tat Savituh" (तत्सवितुः), acclaimed all over the world and enshrining in itself the highest ideal to be sought, the Truth of all truths to be pondered over and meditated upon by man, is the supreme mantra known as Gayatri. The inspiration of this mantra has been experienced everywhere and has attracted the hearts of all thinkers and seekers in all parts of the world. All those that have come under the inspiration of this mantra have eulogised it as the great mantra which reveals to man what should be the object of his seeking, the highest end to be achieved by him in life.⁵⁸

The theme of Gayatri, the subject that is taught and enjoined upon us as the supreme goal is that Truth of all truths by the pursuit of which all our doings—great or small, high or low—lose all their differences and become worthy ends. The highest end of human life is contained in the pursuit of that supreme reality which has been described variously as the Atman or the Soul, the Paramatman or the Supreme Soul, the Brahman and so on. In the uttermost solitude of the mind,

in the deepest silence and peace of meditation, man must gain the divine presence of God. Only then will his whole life be illuminated, his entire being irradiated in such a manner that all things will lose their differences for him and he will have the vision of the unifying, harmonising principle permeating the whole universe. In that moment of meditation the quintessence of man's pure mind must contemplate that radiant presence, that Light Divine, and man must pray that Light might fill his own being. "Thou art the source and centre of light and energy to all the radiant spheres in the heavens. May that Light of thine bring illumination to me and may thy energy fill my whole being! Thou art the reservoir of power for all things that have power. May that power of thine reach me and permeate my whole self! Thou art the cause of cosmic peace and harmony. May that harmony and peace fill my soul!" In this manner, the individual seeker expresses his uncontainable longing for the light and energy, the power and peace of the Brahman and pronounces the meditative prayer, "We fill our contemplative, meditative minds with the light of that Supreme Being, that Light Divine, who vitalises and inspires our minds, our motives and our actions." Thus the greatness of the Gayatri lies in the fact that it enshrines the praise of the Cosmic Light and is the means to the realisation of that supreme reality.

"This being who arises, blazing and brilliant, he arises, bringing life to all", says the "Taittiriya Aranyaka." Elsewhere, it says, "This Aditya is the Brahman." It is this very Aditya who is eulogised in the Gayatri. Singing the praise of Savita, the soul of the universe, it is the means to the realisation, through meditation, of that Savita. It is this same Cosmic Light which is praised in the Upanishads as the Para Brahman. "That supreme Truth, knowing which, all truths are known," that Truth of all truths is this Light Divine."

But what ground is there to assert that the deity which symbolises and stands for the supreme reality called the Para

Brahman is this Savita and no other? Is it indeed a fact that Savita's light is the manifestation of the transcendental effulgence of the Supreme person? How can it be believed that the mantra called Gayatri is the unfailing, infallible means to know and realise the 'Light of all lights? What is the appropriateness of describing this Gayatri, which is a metrical form of versification, as the supreme formula enshrining the supreme reality known as the Para-Brahman? Such questions are natural and proper and they will be discussed in detail in the next section.

CHAPTER IV

The Means to Man's Highest End

“तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं” is the great mantra called Gayatri, renowned for its virtue all over the world. It is addressed to Savita, who is its theme. Hence it is well known by its other name of Savitri. The Brhad-aranyaka says “Gayatri itself may be called Savitri too.” (गायत्रीमेव सावित्रीमनुब्रूयात्)

The term ‘Savita’ means the supreme Lord, the will behind the universe and its cause, the immanent spirit, in dwelling all and controlling all from within. The object of meditation and adoration in this mantra is the Para Brahman. The term ‘Bharga’ in the mantra means the supreme effulgence of the Para Brahman. It is a truly ‘proper’ or appropriate name, that is to say, it is a significant name (अन्वर्थनाम), in as much as the effulgent light of the Para Brahman destroys ignorance, avidya, and all evil acts of omission and commission springing from ignorance. It has the attribute Varenya, fit to be sought as boon, because it is the worthy object of meditation and adoration for all. The term ‘Dhi’ means reason, the power of judgement or discrimination. The gist of the mantra, broadly speaking, is -- Let us meditate upon that supernal effulgence of the Para Brahman which destroys all ignorance, may Savita himself inspire us and prompt us so to meditate.

Two objections have been raised in this connection. The first is that the deity mentioned as the object of meditation in this mantra is not the Para Brahman, the supreme being. In Other words, Savita and Para Brahman are not identical deities. Savita is some lesser deity.

This objection has been effectively met with in the Brahma-sutras and other works. The argument runs thus. It is contended on behalf of the opposition that the light referred to in the mantra as the object of meditation is not the transcendental reality which is the Light of all lights and which is

greater than and beyond all other lights. In support of this stand is cited the statement of the Chandogya Upanishad यदतः परो दिवो ज्योतिः “Since the Light Divine is beyond this . . .” This Upanishad statement is interpreted as a statement setting down the limitations of the light mentioned in the mantra in contradistinction to the supreme Light. In other words, it is argued, the light referred to here is an inferior light, not that Light Divine which pervades the whole universe and which, being infinite, lies still beyond. In answer to this objection, a detailed description of the nature of the light mentioned in this mantra is given. The argument is clinched with the statement, also quoted from the same Chandogya Upanishad, तावानस्य महिमा “Such is the greatness of this (light).” Thus is the objection refuted, and it is affirmed in conclusion that the light which is the subject of all this controversy is indeed the Light Divine and no other.

The second objection raised on this point may be summarised thus : The Savita of the Gayatri mantra is one of the latter-day deities of the Rk Samhita. He is different both in form and in function from the earlier deities, Indra, Aditya, Agni and so on. The very conception of Savita is one which could occur to the sages and seers only of far later times than those who composed the earlier parts of the Samhita. The profundities of Nature’s wonders in all its endless phases were experienced intensely and comprehensively only by these later Rshis. To express this experience in symbolic form, a new personification of nature or a new deity was needed. The conception of Savita was thus evolved, and it satisfied the felt need. This is the line of reasoning contained in the second objection. The whole point is to prove that the theme of the Gayatri mantra is not Para Brahman.

This objection too is quite improper as it is not borne out by facts. It is rather based on a certain pre-conceived fancy that the conceptions of deities in the Rk Samhita must have been a matter of slow historical development, maturing by degrees from crude and narrow ideas to refined and comprehensive ideas.

In the third Mandala of the Rk Samhita occurs the statement "God Twashta, of cosmic form, is also called Savita...."¹ It is confirmed by the statement, belonging to the tenth Mandala, "God Twashta, also called Savita, who is of cosmic form, is indeed the Creator and Progenitor" (X, 10, 5). Such instances can be multiplied. But they make it clear that the cause and creator of the universe, Prajapati, though in his original form he is the single reality behind all, manifests himself in a diversity of forms and under a corresponding diversity of names, in consequence of the diversity of his functions. It is, therefore, far from correct to think that Aditya, Varuna, Surya, Indra and so on, are all different gods and Savita is, likewise, another god, with an entirely different form and function. The creation of the universe, the prompting of its doings, the regulating of all its affairs -- all these functions belong to the sphere of the Supreme Reality itself, which is here called Savita. Savita himself is Aditya and also the Supreme Being within Aditya.

Savita, derived from the root Su, takes the forms Shu bearing a causative sense, and Shun meaning 'delivering from the Creature's womb.' Cognate words derived from this root verb have been employed in the sense of 'create', 'cause' or 'pour' (oblations etc.) -- Sayana gives all these different meanings to this word according to the context.

Statements of the Rk Samhita declare without the least doubt or ambiguity that Savita is the lord of all Cosmic laws like creation and existence. It is, for instance, affirmed that, through Savita's grace, the Rbhus divided into four the chamasa vessel which was one at first.² This statement, though in new symbols, describes the act of cosmic creation and nothing else. It not only shows the relation between Aditya or Savita and the work of creation but it indicates the role of the Rbhus in this matter. There are abundant evidences to show what is described as (असुरस्य भक्षणम्) and (एकं सन्तं पात्रम्) is nothing else than the solar disc. The four elements, the sun, the moon, heaven (or ether) and earth, collectively formed one single causal reality,

before becoming divided in the form of cosmic creation. This unity of form of the causal reality is just the same at the time of dissolution as it is before creation.

In this connection, it is interesting to observe the description of the two forms of supreme reality as given in the Samhita and the Upanishads. The first one is Savita's Chamasa whose form cannot be concealed; or the Chamasa of Savita who cannot be concealed. The second one is the description of the golden vessel of Truth or Reality, the mouth of which is closed. In both the descriptions, the form or the body of Savita or Aditya is spoken of as a golden vessel. And so too is that of the Supreme Reality. This fact establishes the essential identity of Savita or Aditya the Supreme Reality. What is more, this golden vessel of Aditya called Chamasa is itself the model of the golden vessel used in Yajna or sacrifice. And this vessel is also termed Chamasa, which establishes once more the fact that the Yajna-Purusha or the Supreme Person, who is the sacrificer, the sacrifice as well as the object of the sacrifice, is himself the Supreme Reality too.

It is now necessary to consider what exactly is the nature of the four divisions of the original single reality. Twashta's single, undivided Chamasa or form or body is Aditya. It is through Aditya that Twashta creates all worlds and perpetually watches and watches over them. When Aditya seems to pass from east to west dividing the day into day-time and night-time, east and west are the two positions of Aditya. In the divisions of the year by the solar movement, south and north, marked by the southern and northern equinoxes, are two other positions of Aditya. Thus, east, west, south and north are the four positions of the Sun, or the four quarters, as described in the Panchavimsa Brahmana. These four positions of the Sun or the four quarters indicated by them may be regarded as the divisions of the Chamasa figuratively described.

Indra's weapon of Vajra (the thunder-bolt) may, on the basis of certain other Rk Passages, be said to be symbolised by the Chamasa and its four divisions. For it is said that Twashta gave

the Vajra to Indra. And when Indra employed it against the demon Vrtra, the Vajra is said to have become divided into four. The division of the Vajra becoming split up into four and that of the Chamasa into four have such close correspondence that both may be considered variations of the same symbolic description.

But the significance, from the stand-point of the present discussion, of all these passages lies in this, that they clearly show that Twashta, Aditya, Savita and Indra are all different forms and names of the same reality.

The Nirukta interpretation of the Rbhus confirms, from still another point of view, the theme of the foregoing discussion. According to this interpretation, the term 'Rbhus' is employed frequently in the Samhita because it signifies either those that shine by virtue of their truth, or those that shine by virtue of their own intrinsic worth and excellence. And expatiating further on this theme, the Nirukta shows that Aditya's rays are also called Rbhus, "आदित्यरश्मयोऽप्यृभव उच्यन्ते".

The effulgence of Aditya dividing into Rbhus or rays is analogous to the description of Aditya's Chamasa dividing itself into four. Thus, once again, it is emphasised that the supreme reality is none other than Aditya, by whatever other term he may be described elsewhere, owing to the exigencies of the context. The number one is employed to signify the original undivided and undifferentiated state of the central reality when it is acting as the cause of creation. And when it reveals or expresses itself as the effect, it divides and multiplies itself. It may be said that the one has now become four or that it has become many. In spreading itself out through its rays, it causes the divisions of time and space. It is these rays that are responsible for the concepts of time and space that are called Rbhus. There are abundant instances of statements in the Srutis or the Vedas, which support the view set forth here. Some of these Sruti statements directly establish identity between the Rbhus and Aditya's rays. "The Rbhus who appear as the rays of the sun are the bringers of rain and plenty. They are the nurses of the plants. They have their dwelling in Aditya's home."

“संमीढ्य यद्भुवना पर्यसर्पत” (I. 161. 12). Statements like these refer to the rays of Aditya as the cause of all things in the universe, which are the differentiated forms of one supreme cause, named Aditya.

The Rbhus are described as the eyes of the sun. In another passage they are said to have derived their speed of travel from their father, Aditya. These descriptions reveal the nature of Aditya as well as the inseparable relation between Aditya and the Rbhus. It is thus clearly established that the creation of the Rbhus is due to the grace of Aditya or Savita.

The work of creation consists in transforming cosmic reality which is immortal and infinite into its embodied form which is finite and mortal. It further consists in dividing, differentiating and diversifying of the multitudes of embodied existences, conscious and non-conscious, moving and non-moving. And this task of embodying the unbodyed, of differentiating the undifferentiated whole is the task of Savita or Surya who is the maker and regulator of Dharma, the Law that binds and holds all together. In certain Rk passages, the verb root ‘ma’ with the prefix ‘vi’ is used to denote the work done by Savita, which includes the whole gamut of functions culminating in the apportionment of appropriate duties to the multitudes of existences. To give form to the formless, to bring into embodied existence all the three worlds, this, in brief, is the work of Savita.

As stated above, the Atharva Samhita speaks of the cosmos being contained in the Chamasa, the golden vessel or body of Surya or Savita, reiterating the description of the same theme in the Rk Statement (I. 110. 3) quoted above. And it has already been shown that the golden vessel, the hiranmaya patra, referred to in the Isavasya Upanishad, is not different from the Chamasa of the Samhita passages.

The Isa passage is addressed to Pushan, which means Surya. Pushan is besought to disclose the Truth, the Supreme Reality within the Sun’s (Surya’s or Aditya’s) disc, hidden from the world by the golden glory with which he has enveloped himself.

Rk Passages also speak of the Supreme Reality as being hidden (from the world) in its disembodied state. And they go on to describe how from this formless, invisible state it was transformed into the embodied and visible state with all its manifold diversity in order to enable the world to perceive and know the single Supreme Reality behind all this diversity.³ It is to be noted that, both in the Rk passages and in the Upanishadic or other passages bearing on this theme, the same term Agohya is frequently employed for 'hidden' or 'invisible'. The Rbhus, who dwell within Savita in his Aditya form, are only the rays of Aditya.⁴ In the final analysis, everything resolves itself into Aditya. Mantras like "(न प्रमिये सवितुः)" leave no doubt that controlling the worlds, protecting and fostering all existences and all other activities relating to the functioning of the universe are the doings of Aditya in his Savita form.⁵

Varuna, the presiding deity of Rta is also another manifestation of Savita himself and nothing more. "Savita is Truth, and the Law (Dharma).⁶ "Savita is the Lord of all things, moving and nonmoving."⁷ "The microcosmic as well as the macrocosmic exists and moves in conformity with his (Savita's) regulation.⁸ All these and many other descriptions of Savita closely resemble the descriptions of Varuna, the presiding deity over Rta. It is, therefore, abundantly clear that there is no difference whatsoever between Savita and Varuna. They are not two different deities but two aspects of the same reality. One and the same principle is described with appropriate variations of attributes, according to the context, in different passages, under the names of Savita and Varuna.

The epithets 'Amati' and 'Maya', occurring in these descriptions, are extremely helpful in showing the identity between Savita and Varuna. The epithets describe power and beauty. Varuna's power and beauty are described in the same style and phraseology as the golden effulgence of the supreme being dwelling in Aditya. For instance, the Rk description of Savita उदुष्य देवः; etc.,⁹ and the Rk description of Varuna ऋतस्य बुध्न

उषसां etc., are a close and striking parallel. Both these passages describe the unearthly and non-material radiance and the divine might and power of the same reality differently designated as Savita and Varuna. The epithet 'Amati' in the first passage and the epithet 'Maya' in the second are both interpreted as divine radiance or effulgence. 'Amati' has the attribute 'hiranyayim' or golden, descriptive of the glorious beauty of Savita's effulgent beams. In the second passage, 'Maya' has the simile 'Chandreva', 'like the moon', to convey the idea of Varuna's glorious beauty.¹⁰

Moreover, the nature and function of both these effulgences are also the same. The verse describing Savita or Surya ऋतेन विश्वं भुवनं etc., and the Varuna verse विश्वा रूपाणि प्रतिमुञ्चते etc., both describe how the effulgences of these deities make the entire universe attractive and charming by spreading their glory all over the universe. Varuna's radiance, described as his messenger, is said to be golden-winged.¹¹ And Savita's radiance, described as his chariot, is said to be golden.¹² These descriptions also establish the identity of Savita and Varuna. Also, there are Vedic evidences to identify both Savita and Varuna with Aditya. The description of Varuna's horse in the verse वारुणो वा अश्वः,¹³ "The horse belonging to Varuna.....", is nothing but the race of Aditya or Surya or Savita, the lord of earth and heaven, holding his diurnal course across the vault of heaven.¹⁴

The safe-guarding of right, the maintenance and protection of truth and the regulation of the universe -- all these are the duties in common between Savita and Varuna, as evidenced by many passages.¹⁵ It is because Savita, like Varuna, is the guardian and controller of the universe that he is also described as 'Mitra', the friend (of the worlds).¹⁶

It is a note-worthy fact that the famous epithet 'Asura' (mighty being) used as an attribute of Varuna is also used of Savita, as in the verse, "Let us seek the power and vigour of Savita, the mighty god, the Creator and ruler (of all)." In this verse is employed the term 'Asurasya' for 'the mighty'.

The laudatory verses sung in praise of both Savita and Varuna are also identical both in spirit and in form. For example, a prayer addressed to Savita, says, “O thou Savita, if we have sinned through our ignorance or our arrogance, through our individual weakness or common human frailty, forgive thou our sins. If we have railed against any god or other divine being, forgive us for doing so. May no harm (*i.e.* punishment) light upon us.” Similar, both in substance and in style, is the prayer addressed to Varuna in the verse यत्किञ्चेदं ब्रह्म देव्ये etc. Varuna and Savita are thus manifestations of the same supreme reality.

Considering that Savita and Varuna are both two different manifestations of Aditya’s sublime glory, their golden effulgence is also descriptive of Aditya’s own embodied form. The Rk Samhita description of Aditya’s golden radiance in such verses as ‘Hiranyayim’ and ‘Amatim’ and the Upanishadic description of the supreme being dwelling within Aditya are identical. In the Brhad-aranyaka, this supreme person’s radiant form is said to be like an orange – coloured robe, or like silk of the purest quality, or like the lustre of the glow-worm golden (or of the golden dragon-fly), or like the blazing flames of fire, or like the red lotus, or like the tongues of lightning.¹⁷ In the Chandogya, this supreme person’s figure is said to be enveloped, from head to heel, in a dazzling divine radiance which is fascinatingly attractive. And these Upanishadic descriptions of Aditya’s personality are almost identical with the Rg Vedic descriptions too.¹⁸

Aditya is lauded in two different ways in the Upanishads. The form by which he carries on the affairs of the world, manifesting the phenomena of sunrise and sunset, is that form of his which is perceptible to the world. But that form of his which is described in verses like न वै तत्र न निम्लोच.¹⁹ “There, verily, is never conceivable, the passing phenomenon of (the sun’s) rise or decline” – this original form of the supreme being within Aditya is eternally brilliant. For him there is no day and night; it is everlasting day with him.²⁰ This divine effulgence is not only eternal but non-material.

The Rk Samhita abounds in laudatory verses describing that form of Cosmic reality which is visible to the world (as Aditya or Varuna) and which has under its control the whole universe of moving and non-moving things. Though perceptible to the world this divine halo is non-material. With his blazing beams, Aditya, who is like the very eye of Mitra and Varuna, rises in the heavens and pervades all earth and heaven. On the other hand, the Rk verses do not rest with the description of only this external, visible form of the Cosmic person. They declare, in full-throated praise, that the supreme soul, dwelling and moving within Surya, the sun, is the harmonising Principle, co-ordinating and unifying all things in the universe. हिरण्यगर्भस्समवर्तताग्रे

“First and foremost was there the being of the golden womb (*i. e.* of golden form).” The being referred to in statements of this sort is the supreme soul in his Savita form. All traditional interpretations of the sublime Gayatri mantra, तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं, affirm that the Savita addressed here is the supreme person himself in one of his embodiments. Bhattabhaskara’s exposition says that Savita’s divine radiance can confer not only the light and energy essential for the existence and for all the doings of the world but also that inner light, that spiritual illumination or sublime knowledge of supernal reality which is essential for supreme self-realisation.²¹ Mahidhara in his commentary on the Suklayajurveda explains that the burden of this prayer is — we shall meditate on this divine effulgence which belongs to and emanates from the Para Brahman who is in all existences as their inner controller, who is the cosmic cause, who is designated by such names as Hiranya-garbha, who is the dweller within Aditya and who is described in the Vedanta as Truth, Consciousness and Bliss. It is Aditya’s transcendental light that is described in the Rk verse उद्भयं तमसस्पति etc., and in the Taittiriya Samhita passage अगन्म ज्योतिरुत्तमं etc. (T.S. I. 5. 8. 6)

It is note-worthy that this same Bharga or divine effulgence (of Savita) is described as the auspicious light as सुतेजाः the light born of the supreme being.²² In such contexts, a definite, inevitable correlation is established between Aditya’s auspicious

radiance and the fact that the Soma juice is unfailingly extracted (and hence is always available) for sacrifice in such families as adore and worship this divine radiance. But this point will be examined in greater detail when the relation between Gayatri and Soma juice will be discussed.

What the Upanishads have described as "this Supreme Light, the Light of all lights" is itself here named Bharga. This Bharga is that supernal light of the Para Brahman which is destructive of all ignorance. This is the conviction and testimony of the Upanishads.

The prayer enshrined in the Gayatri asks for that gracious inspiration, that inner prompting of the mind and heart and soul which leads, through meditation, to the realisation of the transcendental light of Savita which is beyond human perception and which cannot be attained by the mere poring over or recitation of the Vedas. This amounts to saying that, for the realisation of the nature of the transcendental light of the supreme spirit, the contemplation and meditation of Gayatri, accompanied by its recitation, is the right way. Sree Sankara explains this fact in his introduction to the passage on Gayatri, in his commentary on the Chandogya. The Brahman is not perceptible to the senses of sight and so on. Nor is he to be grasped by the intellect. He is not anything in this gross, empirical, phenomenal world. Writing in this strain, the great commentator concludes that the description of the supreme soul is possible only in negative terms -- He is not this, not this.... Realisation of his non-material, hence formless, essence is therefore, possible only through spiritual meditation. And for such meditation, the right means is this sublime Gayatri mantra.

It is true that there are several other poetic metres. But it is only through the aid of the Gayatri metre that realisation of the supreme is possible. That it is only Gayatri, of all metres, which has this power is proved by the prominent place it has in the ceremony of sacrifice. Such hallowed and potent acts as sacrifice are the means to the knowledge of the divine

reality. And for the proper conduct of these acts, the Gayatri is an indispensable aid. Hence it is tantamount to saying that the most important instrument for the attainment of the knowledge of the Brahman is Gayatri and Gayatri alone.

This importance of Gayatri for supreme realisation is revealed by three factors. For one thing, it was Gayatri who brought and delivered to the gods the Soma juice, one of the principal accessories to sacrifice. Secondly, Gayatri pervades over all other metres and embraces them all in her own being. And, finally, she pervades the atmosphere and presides over sacrificial acts during all the three auspicious periods prescribed for such duties. It is for these reasons that Gayatri has such a conspicuous place in the act of sacrifice.

Moreover, Gayatri is the mother of the Brahmanas. The knowledge of the nature of the Brahman depends on Gayatri. Hence, Gayatri alone is the supreme instrument for the realisation of the fundamental nature of the Light Divine called the Para-Brahman.²³

These are the three points stated by Bhagavan Sankara. It has now to be examined what exactly is the Sruti foundation for his view, what statements of the Sruties or the Vedas have given such supreme importance to Gayatri.

The Capture of Soma — Gayatri as Syena, the golden eagle

The unique potency and power of Gayatri is seen from the fact that it was she who captured and brought the Soma juice which is one of the principal accessories to the act of sacrifice. This episode of the capture of Soma is described in prominent passages of both the Samhitas and the Brahmanas. It is also related in story form in the Rk Samhita which is the base of all vedic literature.

The Suparna (lit. bright-winged) or Syena, the golden eagle, brought and delivered to Manu the Soma juice desired by

the gods. The entire species of this bird acquired honour and distinction on earth because this golden eagle scared away the guards keeping vigil on Soma, seized the juice, winged its way in the heavens with the speed of thought and conferred a great blessing on the world by bringing the valuable sacrificial libation.

This bird which, flying in the heavens with the speed of thought, brought Soma to the world, brought along with this boon a new access of will and faith. By the capture of Soma and the presentation of it to the world, it did a tremendous service to the world.

The bird rendered an invaluable piece of help to acts of sacrifice by bringing Soma from Dyu-loka, the highest heavens. And Indra, his vigour and might increasing in tremendous measure by the Soma drink proffered to him in due ceremonial, became invincible and vanquished and wiped out all foes, all evil forces.

But, while the Syena, beaming with joy, was alighting from the heavens with the captured Soma, one of the guards keeping watch over the divine drink, named Krsanu, equipped with the bow and arrows, came down from the heavens with the speed of thought, pursued the bird as it flew away and sent a shaft after it from his bow. Thus, while descending from Antariksha, the lower heavens which form the realm of Indra, the Syena had to fight with Krsanu, and, being shot with his arrow, lost one of her wings and became wounded.²⁴

Such is the Samhita account of the capture of the Soma juice. Prima facie, it seems an impossible task to disentangle the metaphysical or philosophical significance of this apparently queer and fantastic myth. But the Aitareya - aranyaka, introducing the sage Vamadeva, the author of the present Sukta, describes this episode from the philosophical standpoint. The Rk Samhita verse गर्भे नु IV. 27. 1. etc. is quoted and, in explanation, it is stated - “गर्भे एतच्छयानो वामदेव एवमुवाच”. “Even while he was in the womb, Vamadeva spoke thus.” In other

words, the philosophical import of the passage is that, while still in the womb, Vamadeva understood the origin and character of all gods, although he was hemmed in by hundreds of iron bars, he still escaped the blockade and flew out like the golden eagle. Sankara, Ananda Tirtha and Sayana concur in unfolding the significance of the metaphor by stating that Vamadeva had to enter hundreds of bodies. That is to say, he had to be born hundreds of times. That was his bondage, as indicated by his being closed in by hundreds of iron bars. At last, however, he attained enlightenment and hence he found his release, like a bird escaping from the bars of a cage. But if the context of the Aitareya – aranyaka passage is examined, it seems to suggest that, while still in the womb, Vamadeva realised the reality of all things and, casting off his mortal coils, found his deliverance.²⁵ Therefore the mantra, ग॒र्भे नु seems to refer wholly to Vamadeva himself.

Verses I. 32·14 and X. 99·8, among others, say that Indra is similar to the Syena bird. On this evidence, some scholars express the view that the mantra ग॒र्भे नु refers to Indra himself. But this view is clearly far-fetched; it stretches the metaphor too far.

In the same episode, the Syena bird is also termed 'Suparna'. In some places, Sayana explains the term Syena by remarking – – इ॒येनः शंसनी॒यगति॑मान् पक्ष्या॒कारा गाय॑त्री "The Syena is a bird having a praise-worthy power of flight; it is Gayatri in bird form." But since a number of terms like Syena, Suparna and Gayatri are all employed in these passages, it is not possible to arrive at a definite meaning without a full knowledge of the details of the story in all its different versions. Therefore, after first studying the versions of the episode as related in the Taittiriya Samhita, Aitareya Brahmana and Satapatha Brahmana, it would be easier to consider what might be the philosophical import of the account of Gayatri's capture of Soma.

Here is the account of the Taittiriya Samhita. There arose between Kadru and Suparni a sharp dispute, born rivalry, which

of the two was the more beautiful and charming. Kadru, who got the better of her rival, held her under her subjection. Then she said to Suparni, "The Soma juice is found in the third heaven. If thou canst fetch it for me, thou mayest win back the deliverance and liberty." This Kadru was none other than Prithvi, the earth and Suparni was Antariksha, the skies. The various metres were the children of Suparni. Kadru made a concession that, as children were fostered and reared for the deliverance of their mother, Suparni might regain her liberty by the aid of her children, by having Soma fetched for her by them in lieu of herself. Then Suparni explained the situation to her children. Then the Jagati metre, consisting of fourteen letters, flew up to the skies but returned without being able to bring the Soma drink. She lost two of its letters in the process; yet she was able to come by the animals consecrated for sacrifice. It is for this reason that the Jagati metre is rich in the possession of animals. A person who has plenty of animal wealth will verily be crowned.

After this, the Trishtup metre, having thirteen letters, flew up to the skies. But, like Jagati, she too lost two of her letters and failed to capture the Soma drink. She, however, brought with her Dakshina, money to be distributed at the sacrifice, and all other materials needed for sacrifice. For this reason, at noon-day rituals, Dakshina is distributed; for this time is under the influence of Trishtup. That act in which a person gives away his wealth in charity is considered to be a true penance and sacrifice.

Finally, Gayatri, bearing her four letters, set forth towards the skies, accompanied by a goat blazing with an unearthly light. And with the help of this goat, she was able to capture the Soma drink. While on her way back, she managed to bring back with her the four letters left by Jagati and Trishtup. Thus the Gayatri came to have eight letters altogether.

Thus, although the shortest and smallest of the metres, Gayatri has the most important and the most distinguished place

and part in sacrifices, because of her success in capturing and bringing to the world the Soma drink. Such is the testimony of the Brahnavadins, the seekers and knowers of the Brahman, the eternal reality. For the same reason, too, Gayatri, is of all metres, the most brilliant and excellent.

The bird-formed Gayatri brought two sacrificial libations in her two talons and one in her back. She drank up the libation she carried in her back. Hence it is that the morning and noon-day libations are clear and pure Soma, while the third evening libation is the crushed juice.

The version of the Aitareya Brahmana is slightly different. It is related in two ways. The first is this.²⁶ While Somaraja lived with the Gandharvas, the gods and the sages desired to attain him and engaged themselves in meditating upon him. While they were pondering over the way of gaining him, the goddess of speech appeared before him and said, "The Gandharvas lust for women. Hence send me on your behalf and I will fetch Soma and present him to you." At this, the gods said, "We cannot bear parting from you. We cannot agree." Then the goddess of speech soothingly declared, "Send me for a bit and attain your objective of gaining Soma. Afterwards, the moment you wish for me, I will come to you." When she had given this assurance, they agreed to send her and, with her aid, they gained Soma.²⁷

Elsewhere the narrative takes another form. The gods, according to this version, reflected for long how to gain some dwelling in the skies and then, approaching the meters, they prayed, "Go ye to the skies and fetch for us Soma who dwells there." "Be it so," promised the metres and, assuming the form of birds, soared up to the skies. As they transformed themselves into golden eagles for the capture of Soma, this story became wellknown as Suparnopakhyana, the story of the Golden Eagles.

When these bird-formed metres soared up to Soma, each of them had only four letters. The first metre thus to take flight heavenward was the Jagati metre. And she became tired out

even on her way and so, leaving three of her letters behind, she returned with just one letter. But she brought with her the sacrificial pledge or vow, Yagadiksha, and penance.

The Trishtup metre, which followed Jagati a while later, was also obliged, through fatigue and faintness, to retrace her steps, after traversing a bit more than half the distance. But she had to shed only one of her letters and was able to return with the remaining three. And her endeavour was fruitful in so much that she was able to bring back with her the accessories of sacrifice, especially Dakshina, gold and other riches to be distributed at the sacrifice.

Finally, the gods approached Gayatri and besought her to fetch for them Soma-*raja*. Gayatri agreed to do so and asked the gods to follow her, chanting the benedictory mantras along the way. The gods gladly obeyed and set forth after her, reciting the benedictory hymns ऋ and ॠ. For the gods knew that, by the virtue of these mantras, their journey could be accomplished without difficulties and that their mission would surely be fruitful. And Gayatri did, without encountering any obstacle, reach the region where Soma was kept under guard and, bearing in her talons and her beak the Soma drink, she flew back in triumph, having first gathered the four letters left behind by Jagati and Trishtup, between them.²⁸

Gayatri's Unique Excellence among the Metres ; Her Prestige and Influence over all the three Sacrificial Rituals of the day

When Gayatri had returned, bearing with her the three letters left behind by Trishtup and the one letter left behind by Jagati, those two metres drew near to her and begged her, "Our letters, which are our wealth, have now come back as your acquisition. Please give them back to us." But Gayatri answered, "No; those letters are no longer yours. As it was I that was able to win back what you had lost, they are indeed my very own." Thereupon those two metres went in appeal to the gods and made their complaint. But the gods took the part

of Gayatri and, turning to her, gave their verdict: "Since it was you that brought the letters back, they have truly become yours." And so Gayatri came to be the eight-lettered metre, while Trishtup had to remain a three-lettered metre and Jagati only single-lettered.

It was now possible for Gayatri, with her eight letters, to take part in the morning sacrifice. But Trishtup, with only three letters left, could not take part in the noon-day sacrifice. And so Gayatri declared that she would take part in the noon-day sacrifice too and claimed her share of the sacrificial libation. Trishtup had to agree. For, she could now participate in the noon-day sacrifice only in association with Gayatri. Moreover, this association gave her a new access of power; for it was as if she were now eleven-lettered; instead of being only three-lettered, a sorry state to which she had been reduced hitherto.

Jagati, too, having become reduced to a single-lettered state, was now unqualified to participate in the third sacrifice of the day, namely the vestal or evening sacrifice. And Gayatri offered to become Jagati's partner too and enable her to participate in the evening sacrifice as of old, on condition that she herself was given her due share of the sacrificial offerings. Fain did Jagati accept the terms; for her partnership with Gayatri enhanced her status to that of twelve-lettered metre, as Gayatri and Trishtup had already sealed a pact of inseparable comradeship. Thus it came to pass that Gayatri became a eight-lettered metre; Trishtup an eleven-lettered and Jagati, a twelve-lettered metre.²⁹

It was, therefore, through the aid of Gayatri that the other two metres regained their lost power. Moreover, the whole gamut of metres came to be based on the structure of Gayatri. Naturally, Gayatri came to be more honoured than all other metres. All Sruti sayings give her full-throated praise. For instance, the Taittiriya Samhita hymn गायत्री कनिष्ठा etc. says, "Youngest of all the metres, Gayatri, the chaste encompassed the face of sacrifice." And the Aitareya-aranyaka passage अथातः शिरः etc. says, Now follows (the description of) the (very) head

(of it all); the very culmination of all the metres is reached in Gayatri, and hence it is that, as the head is the supreme of all the organs (of the body), Gayatri is the foremost (among all) metres”.

As Gayatri is the base and all the other metres have their structures built thereon, Gayatri has been lauded as the mother of all metres.³⁰ In his comment on the Aitareya-aranyaka passage quoted above, Sayana says, “The structural form of each one of the other metres is fashioned after this (*i.e.* Gayatri) by the recurring addition, in each case, of four letters.” it is thus

Gayatri	$(8 \times 3) =$	24 letters
Ushnik	$(24 + 4) =$	28 „
Anushtup	$(24 + 4 + 4) =$	32 „
Brhati	$(24 + 4 + 4 + 4) =$	36 „
Pangti	$(24 + 4 + 4 + 4 + 4) =$	40 „
Trishtup	$(24 + 4 + 4 + 4 + 4 + 4) =$	44 „
Jagati	$(24 + 4 + 4 + 4 + 4 + 4 + 4) =$	48 „

In this manner, since all other metres are derived from Gayatri it is the first and foremost of all metres in the fullest sense.

Agni is the Chief, the indispensable element of Sacrifice. And ‘Gayatri’ is but a synonymous term for ‘Agni’, or, in other words, Gayatri is a substitute for Agni, the sacrificial fire. For this reason too, Gayatri is the head of all metres.³¹

The preeminence of Gayatri is revealed, says Sri Sankaracharya, by the fact that her writ runs in all the three daily sacrificial ceremonies, thus furnishing a third reason for the principal role of Gayatri in all acts of sacrifice.

The Aitareya Brahmana accounts for the supremacy of Gayatri in a different way. According to its version, that part of the Soma drink carried by the bird Gayatri in her right talon became the libation for the morning sacrifice. This morning sacrifice is the dwelling-place of Gayatri. For this reason, among all the sacrifices, the morning sacrifice is regarded as the richest and most perfect. One who understands this secret becomes the foremost and most prominent person among all sacrificers.

That part of the Soma juice carried by Gayatri in her left talon became the noon-day libation. But it is slipped off the bird's talon and something of it was spilt. Losing its fullness, this libation became imperfect and could not gain the sanctity of the morning libation. In order to remove this imperfection, the gods installed in it the Trishtup metre and Indra too. Then it attained the vigour and virtue of the morning libation.

The Soma juice carried by the bird Gayatri in her beak became the day's third sacrificial libation. But the golden eagle drank up a part of it, even as she was winging her way down from the heavens. Therefore this drink became tainted and it could not possess the power of the other two libations, not having their purity. The gods observed it in the consecrated sacrificial animals. They worshipped it by means of the sacrificial fire and the sacrificial oblation of ghee. After this, even this third libation attained the purity and potency of the other two libations.³²

From this narrative, it becomes evident that Gayatri, the presiding spirit of the morning sacrifice, can exist independently of the other two metres, Trishtup and Jagati, and has perfect power and influence at the morning sacrifice by virtue of the perfect purity of the morning libation. But, as has been already indicated, the other two metres suffer from the double imperfection of having lost their own completeness by the loss of their letters and of the lack of the purity of the noon-day and evening libations. Hence, without the association of and participation by Gayatri, they are unable to perform their presiding function at the noon-day and evening sacrifices. Perfect in form and successful in its mission of capturing Soma, Gayatri, by reason of its additional virtue of making perfect the other two metres, plays an indispensable role not only in the morning sacrifice but in the other two sacrifices of the day as well. It is also because of the perfect quality of Gayatri that it has been enjoined that this mantra, which indicates victory and fulfilment, should be recited fully and perfectly. In other words, there should be no deficiency of any sort in

the recitation of the mantra, whether in quantity or in tone of voice.

All the passages that lay down such injunctions embody not only the laudation of the Gayatri metre as the most excellent of all metres but a prayer addressed to Savita designated here as the Gandharva.

The Satapatha Brahmana says, "This heavenly being, Gandharva is Aditya or he is himself the god Savita These eight (beings) in the eight (quarters) are sprung from Savita." It is prescribed that this prayer of the Vajasaneya Samhita should be recited: "O thou Savita, speed thou our sacrifice and bless it so that it may be accomplished quickly and without any difficulty." Savita is Aditya and, therefore, all the offerings of the sacrifice belong to him. "Savita, the Gandharva of the heavens, the purifier of the mind, is himself Aditya. May he grant that our sacrifice may be accomplished in due form in every detail!" runs the prayer. If Rathantara Sama is blended with the Gayatri metre and Brihatsama is blended with the Pramana of the metre and if the infallible mantra couched in such form is recited, then it confers not only worldly wealth but everlasting life in heaven. Such is the prescription.

Gayatri has eight letters. Hence it is that the hymns addressed to Savita, which are prescribed for recitation are also eight in number. Agni, the principal factor of all sacrifice is himself Gayatri. So Agni's glory is the glory of Gayatri too. That reveals the preeminent role of Gayatri in the time of sacrifice.

Agni, Gayatri and Syena

Though the shortest and least of all metres, Gayatri was able to capture Soma from the heavens by its worth and excellence. This achievement was possible because of its spiritual power. Hence it was that the gods paid it the highest honour and thus expressed their reverence for it.³³ This Gayatri which

by the power of its spirit was able to fetch Soma to the world is Agni and none other. "Agni itself is Gayatri It became the golden eagle³⁴ Such statements of the Brahmanas identify Gayatri with Syena, the golden eagle. And this identification is based upon and supported by Rk Samhita statements in many passages of the Rg. Veda.

The relation between Agni and the morning sacrifice is very well known. "O Agni, Knower of the Vedas (Jataveda), do thou consume the sacred oblations proffered by us at the morning sacrifice." Hymns of the Rk Samhita expressing such prayers reveal the inseparable relation between Agni and the morning sacrifice.³⁵

It has already been explained that Gayatri and Syena do not stand for different principles but that they are mere modified names of the same reality. It has also been shown that the Gayatri, which assumed the shape of Syena and brought the Soma drink, is not different from Agni. To say that Agni and Syena are but the same principle is merely to express the view embodied in the Rk Samhita statements themselves. It is said in one of these that "the heavens meant for Agni a new (birth) life as Syena." (VII 15.4). That is to say, Agni is here described as being in Dyu-loka in the form of a Syena or golden eagle. The statement referred to here is cited in the Taittiriya Brahmana too. Even in other passages and contexts there are references to the heavenly Syena or the Syena of the heavens. These passages are addressed to and are the descriptions of Marut or Vayu. Since these passages describe Agni taking the form of lightning (Vaidyutagni), it is legitimate to infer the identity of Agni with Syena, from a new standpoint.³⁶ Vaisvanara (*i.e.* Agni) has, among others, the lightning form, as described in many passages. Gayatri is also described by the epithet तेजो गायत्री, "she that shines", either because it is sprung from Agni or because it has the form of Agni.³⁷ Explaining this statement of the Brahmanas, commentators have expressed the view that the act of shining is attributed to Gayatri, even as it is attributed to Agni, just because Gayatri was born along with

Agni.³⁸ Gayatri, like Agni, is said to have the form of a blazing brilliance in such statements as “Gayatri is radiance”. The brilliant radiance of the heavenly Syena also is described in similar terms. In the ‘Divassyena Ishti Prakarana,’ the section on the sacrifice of the celestial Syena of the Taittiriya Brahmana, the mantra “तुभ्यं ता” obviously refers to Agni, as it begins “To thee, Agni”³⁹ In the same section, the mantra अश्याम तं “We shall feed on that which we desire, O Agni” (or we shall feed on that to our heart’s content, O Agni”) is also addressed to Agni. Hence there is no doubt that the description ‘Celestial Syena’ is the description of Agni himself.

Furthermore, the term ‘Suparna’ defines Agni even as it defines Syena. The term ‘Suparna’, standing for the name of a bird, has an esoteric significance in many passages.

“The knowing ones, the poets, image in myriad verbal symbols the same single reality, the blazing radiance divine,” says the hymn of the Rk Samhita, Sayana is of the view that, in this passage, the term ‘Suparna’ describes the supreme soul itself. In certain other passages, where the term ‘Suparna’ is used in the sense of Aditya or Agni, it gives the meaning of beams of rays.⁴⁰ And sometimes it is used as a synonym for Aditya or Agni. “Him, who is the bright-formed celestial being (lit – the bright-winged celestial bird), the great womb of waters; the one who makes all herbs appear (and reveal themselves).” is a description of Agni dwelling in the skies, Antariksha. The mantras Divahsyena and Divyam Suparnam identify Agni, Aditya and Syena, the last of which stands for Gayatri. Hence it is evident beyond the least shadow of a doubt that Syena, Suparna, Agni or Aditya and Gayatri are all synonymous names of the same supreme reality.

**Soma, as Aditya’s Energy; Gayatri, the Means to the
Realisation of this truth**

If, for purposes of the present discussion, Syena is interpreted as Agni dwelling in the skies (or Aditya), then Soma

should be considered the seminal fluid of Aditya, that is to say, the creative energy and vitalising power of Para Brahman in his Aditya form. This Soma, then, is the seed from which spring all existences and all beings belonging to the universe.

Para Brahman who, at first, was single, created in the universe, out of his vital fluid, all things having the nature of fluids. This vital fluid, known as Soma, was poured out into Agni. Agni and Soma have the mutual relation of the feeder and the food. This is what the Brhad-aranyaka says.⁴¹ In the Maitri Upanishad, Soma is described as dwelling in the heart of Aditya and Agni as dwelling in the heart of Soma.⁴² The inseparable relation between Aditya and Soma is described in a great many passages of the Rk Samhita. For instance, "Soma, the womb of waters in Aditya blessed the gods. As the creative and vitalising fluid, it created in Aditya "the Light Divine which is the cosmic cause," says one passage.⁴³ Another says, "Soma is the ocean of the skies. It is the source of all light. It is with the power of Soma that Aditya shines and illuminates."⁴⁴ The import of these passages is that Soma is Aditya's creative energy, and the realisation and experience of this divine energy is possible only by the aid of Gayatri.⁴⁵

A story is cited from the Aitareya Brahmana which states that "Soma who, verily, is the King was in the Gandharvas... ." It concludes, "By that great element Agni (they made Soma King." Relating to this story, the question is sometimes asked about what exactly is the position and status of Gayatri in the matter of the capture of Soma. It is suggested by some that Gayatri had nothing to do with this adventure but that the capture of Soma was done by speech which had assumed a female form for this purpose. . There is no ground for this theory. For the right interpretation of the story, on the evidence of Vedic statements, is that the term 'Gandharva' here denotes Aditya, Soma is his creative energy and 'speech' is Gayatri itself expressed in language. "Thus was Gandharva, the Creator of the gods, a marvellous Being, guards and protects his footstool (*i.e.* the heavens)." In this passage, the heavens, described

as the foot-stool of Gandharva, are the dwelling-place of Soma. The Gandharva, referred to here is Aditya, the source and repository of all waters. Aditya is said to guard and protect the dwelling-place of Soma. And Soma nourishes and preserves the gods. In this manner is Aditya eulogised in the passage. This Gandharva is also called Hiranyagarbha. Immanent and pervasive in the universe, Hiranyagarbha was the first to pronounce speech, hidden up and latent within him (in its unexpressed and voiceless state). And then the gods, endowed with transcendental vision, installed that speech on the pedestal of truth. In this manner the hymns have described the relation between the supreme soul and speech. The story of the capture of Soma in Satapatha Brahmana relates the relation between the supreme being in Aditya and speech and goes on to describe how Soma, which is Aditya's creative energy, became the nourishing and sustaining principle, constituting the very source of life for the gods.

“Soma is indeed energy”, say the hymns. By the grace of Gandharva, manifesting himself as Aditya, creative energy in the form of Soma can be attained by the individual who adores it and seeks it through the medium of Gayatri.

Statements of the Rk Samhita bear ample testimony to the fact that it is not improper to interpret the terms ‘Suparna’, ‘Soma’, ‘Gandharva’ and ‘Vak’, as has been done in the foregoing discussion. A mantra or two may be examined by way of illustration. The mantra चतुष्कपर्दा युवतिः etc. says that the woman who wears the four garments (‘nama’, ‘akhyata’, ‘upasarga’ and ‘nipata’) who is eternally youthful, who assumes the form of the brilliant and illuminating Upanishads, bedecks herself in the brilliant robes of knowledge. The individual soul and the supreme soul (the Jivatman and the Paramatman) are implanted in her. The Eternal Light, which is the cosmic energy, described as Suparna or as Gandharvas can be imbibed and supported only by speech manifesting itself as a woman. This is the burden of all this figurative description. That is why, says Sayana, “the Gandharvas are said to be passionately desirous of woman.”

This very view is expressed in the Rk hymns such as छन्दांसि च दधतो etc. It is there clearly expounded what exactly is the relation between the supreme soul taking the Suparna form and the metres like Gayatri and Soma which is the means and principal accessory of sacrifice and worship. It is emphasised that one can realise the supreme soul by the aid of Gayatri and other metres and by means of Soma proffered at sacrifices in dedicated spirit. In all these passages Gayatri is lauded as the direct means to supreme knowledge and also to all holy acts which are the means to such knowledge. Sankaracharya has pointed out that it is by reason of this unique power that Gayatri has become the principal instrument for the realisation of the Para Brahman.

How can Gayatri, The Principal Accessory of Karma or Ritual, be the means to the realisation of the Brahman, the supreme reality ?

Two objections are raised against the claim that Gayatri is the principal means to the realisation of the Brahman. By those that raise the first objection it is conceded that yajna or sacrifice is a manifestation of the cosmic principle. But it is pointed out that the performance of yajna needs the service of all the metres, not alone of Gayatri. Why then, it is asked, should an exclusive claim be made on behalf of Gayatri?

All the other metres can confer only temporal and evanescent benefits. Gayatri alone can lead to the attainment of that eternal wealth called the Brahman. Therein lies the unique potency and greatness of Gayatri. When this fact is realised, the objection referred to above loses all its force.

The difference between Gayatri and the other metres is brought out in a good many passages. The 'Pra-u-ga Sastra' passage in the Aitareya Aranyaka is one such passage. The question which is raised there is which of the metres is to be resorted to the recitation of the 'pra-u-ga Sastra.' The unique merit of Gayatri is explained in considerable detail in answer to

this inquiry. The Gayatri metre, it is declared, is replete with the almighty vigour and the resplendent effulgence of the Brahman Himself. Hence he who recites at the performance of yajna the 'pra-u-ga Sastra' in the Gayatri metre itself will attain the vigour and splendour of the Brahman Himself. Not that the other metres are useless. Doubtless they have their value. If the 'pra-u-ga Sastra' is recited by the performer of the sacrifice in the Ushnik metre which has the nature of the vital principle, he will acquire longevity. But if this Sastra is composed in the vigorous Anushtup metre, then the sacrificer who recites it acquires vigour. If the Sastra is composed in the wealth-giving Brhati metre, the sacrificer gains great wealth. Similarly, the Pangti metre confers food, the Trishtup confers physical might and the Jagati metre confers live-stock.

Thus all the metres are undoubtedly beneficial. Yet all forms of wealth like food are of transient nature and value. Gayatri, on the contrary, has the nature of the Brahman Himself. Hence it is only if the 'pra-u-ga' Sastra composed in the Gayatri metre is recited at the sacrifice that the sacrificer will be able to realise the Brahman. Gayatri alone, of all the metres, is the direct means to the realisation of the Brahman. Such is the unequivocal declaration made in this Aitareya Aranyaka passage.⁴⁶

Then comes the second objection. It is admitted that Gayatri is the very base and prop of all the metres which are the essential factors of yajna and that it is through Gayatri that they all gained their sustenance, vitality and vigour and their full development. But this only means, it is contended, that Gayatri has the principal part to play in yajna or sacrifice which is essentially a mere ritual, mere Karma. How can Gayatri be the means, let alone the principal means, to the attainment of Brahma-jnana, to the realisation of the Brahman himself? In other words, Karma and Jnana are, according to this objection irreconcilable opposites. As Gayatri is the principal means to the one, it cannot be the means to the other.

This objection is indeed worthy of careful examination. For the question that it raises is one of fundamental importance

in Vedic interpretation. A good deal of the Vedic interpretation is vitiated by the assumption that karma and Jnana are essentially antithetical and contrary in character. If this assumption be true, that would mean that, whatever benefits Karma might bring, it could never bring the highest good, the only good that is really worthwhile aspiring after and that is worth strenuous pursuit. If, on the other hand, it can be established that this assumption is not warranted by facts, then it will be clear that Karma can be a means not only of ordinary blessings but the very highest good. The question here raised about Gayatri goes to the very root of the matter and thus merits close attention.

It is argued that to the spiritual aspirant who seeks to realise the Brahman, Jnana is of the utmost importance inasmuch as it is the very end of his quest. If, through such processes as meditation, penance or communion, Gayatri served the purpose of leading to Brahma-jnana, then it might be claimed that Gayatri is the principal means to jnana or realisation. But the importance of Gayatri is only the performance of Yajna or sacrifice. And Yajna is but Karma, mere ritual. How can Gayatri, the accessory or instrument of Karma, be the means to Jnana? This is the burden of this objection.

If, however, it were borne in mind that all the cosmic activities of the Para-Brahman manifesting Himself as Prajapati are, in the ultimate analysis, inherent in the principle of sacrifice, the objection cited above would not arise at all.

Moreover, a close examination of Savitr-suktas will make it clear that there is no contradiction between Yajna which is an act of ritual and dhyana or meditation which is a mode of knowing, a process of Jnana. For the motive and aspiration of the seeker there is to realise the Bharga or the divine illumination of Savita. These Suktas not only emphasise the indispensable need of meditation but utter the prayer that Savita may graciously grant the will and power to meditate on him. It is enjoined upon the Vipra or the wise seeker that he should concentrate his mind on Savita and should adore and worship

him through dhyana-yoga or fixed and steady meditation.⁴⁷ At the same time it is pointed out that it is the realisation of the divine nature of Savita through such meditation that is the ultimate end of Yajna or sacrifice. Thus Yajna, the way of Karma and dhyana, the way of jnana are equated and made part and parcel of each other.

Besides this, the principle of sacrifice or yajna is described as Visva-tantu or the central thread unifying all cosmic phenomena⁴⁸ and all cosmic activities. Thus Yajna is shown as the all-pervasive principle running through all the universe. Even so, Gayatri which has the principal part to play in the act of sacrifice is also an all-pervasive principle with which the entire universe of things moving and non-moving is shot through. And certain Vedic texts declare that Gayatri embraces within itself the whole universe. Finally, Gayatri is praised as the Para-Brahman Himself.

Is Gayatri but the means to the realisation of the Brahman or is it the end itself, namely the Realisation of the Brahman?

The passage of the Aitareya Aranyaka beginning 'Athatah Sirah' (अथातःशिरः) describes the unique excellence of Gayatri. Though it manifests itself in the form of a metre, it is the indispensable means to the performance of sacrifice.

At this point another question is raised. Let it be admitted that Yajna is a manifestation of the Brahman Himself and that the performance of Yajna would, therefore, be the means to the realisation of the Brahman. Let it also be granted that Gayatri, as a metre, plays the principal part in the performance of Yajna and it is, therefore, indispensable to Yajna. What would all this amount to? It would only mean that Gayatri is, at best, a means to Jnana or realisation. It could never be Jnana or realisation itself. So runs the argument.

But Bhagavan Sankara has met this objection with copious citation of Vedic texts which declare that Gayatri is not only the Sadhana or the means to Jnana but it is the Sadhya or the end

itself, namely Jnana. The critic would have it that the Suktas which describe Gayatri as embracing all this universe of beings, sensate and insensate, refer to Gayatri only as a metre; that they, by no means, identify Gayatri with the supreme principle, namely the Brahman. Sankara refutes this criticism by launching upon an elaborate explanation of the Chandogya text “Etavan-asya-mahima”. To enter into this discussion is beyond our present scope. We are here concerned with the conclusion. It is enjoined upon us in the texts that we should give up the whole mind to the supreme reality and meditate upon it. In other words, by aid of the metre called Gayatri we should surrender our mind to the Brahman enshrined in it. That is the gist of the mantra ‘Gayatri Va idam sarvam’ – ‘All this is indeed Gayatri’. If Gayatri were nothing more than a metre, a mere combination of letters and sounds, it would be unreasonable to say that ‘Gayatri is all this’, meaning thereby that the entire universe with all its infinite variety of beings, sentient and insentient, is part of Gayatri, or, on other words that Gayatri is the Brahman Himself. Gayatri, therefore, is far more than a mere metrical form. The principle designated as Gayatri is the supreme reality itself which indeed is the cause and the effect of all.⁴⁹ The Vedic texts also declare that cause and effect are not distinct things but one and the same reality looked at from different points of view.⁵⁰

It is the Brahman Himself, the Prime Cause of all, that transforms himself as multifarious effects like the eye and the ear, with their respective faculties of vision and audition. In utterance or speech, metre is also one of the effects into which the Cause of all causes transmutes itself. Hence it is that the Aranyakas prescribe that the Para-Brahman who is the final cause of the entire universe should be pursued through one of his own manifestations such as metre.⁵¹

Thus, although in certain passages, the term ‘Gayatri’ has the limited import of a mere metrical form, the Upanishadic text “Gayatri-va-idam-sarvam” refers to and describes the Para-Brahman Himself. There can be neither doubt nor dispute about this point.

The Chandogya text, "Saisha – Chatushpada – Gayatri" (III·12·5) says, "This Gayatri is one that has four feet". Of the four feet referred to here, three relate to the universe which is the effect and the fourth indicates the Para-Brahman who is the cause. Hence, even when the term 'Gayatri' is used in the sense of a metrical form, it should be understood to import this dual aspect of the eternal reality as Cause-cum-Effect.

The first three feet of Gayatri are within the grasp of the intellect, the faculty of human reason, which, after all, is a relatively gross instrument, not far above the mere sensual plane. The final fourth foot of Gayatri can be comprehended and realised only through meditation, dhyana, and communion, yoga.

What is the Vedic evidence, it may well be asked, in support of the description given above of the dual division of the Gayatri, corresponding to its dual nature?

I, iv, 2 of the Chandogya Upanishad describes the ordinary, extrinsic aspect of the various metres, in the passage beginning, "Deva-vai-....". According to this description, the gods, frightened of Death, sought refuge and sanctuary in the Trayi Vidya or the three Vedas, Rk, Yajus and Saman. The Trayi Vidya gave them cover, using the metres as the screen to hide them from pursuing Death. The word 'Chandas' is derived from the root 'chad' which means, literally, to cover up. The metres gained their name of 'Chandas' from this fact of their having covered up and shieded the gods from the notice of Death.

Screened thus by the metres, the story goes on, the gods were still found out by Death. The cover given by the metres was not altogether effective. This signifies that, in their tangible outward form as mere metres, the several metres suffer from a certain imperfection and disability. Even as such they are no doubt beneficial but the service they can render has its limitations. But in their essential, intrinsic nature, the metres can render a lasting service by conferring the highest good, namely, eternal bliss.

This description of the dual aspect of the metres applies especially to Gayatri. For, as has been shown elsewhere, whatever exceptional virtue and potency is possessed by the other metres is all due to Gayatri.

The first three feet of Gayatri, then, represent the supreme reality in its lesser, material manifestation, as effect, in the form of this finite, temporal universe. And the final foot represents the supreme reality in its infinite, and transcendental nature as the ultimate cause of all. Such is the testimony of the Upanishads in this matter.

“Bhumir-antariksham-dyauh”. These eight letters comprise the first foot of Gayatri and declare that this foot embraces all the three worlds. One who realises this truth is said to gain all the wealth of all these worlds.

“Rcho-Yajoomshi-Samani”. These eight letters, forming the second foot of Gayatri, indicate that this foot enshrines the Trayi Vidya or the three Vedas. He who realises this truth is, therefore, said to gain all the spiritual wealth contained in the Trayi Vidya, the very treasure-house of all knowledge.

“Prana-apana-vyana”. The three vital principles denoted in these eight letters form the third foot of Gayatri. He who realises this truth gains all such wealth as takes the form of animals (that can be pressed into man’s service)⁵²

The fourth and last foot of Gayatri represents the self-luminous Aditya Himself who, being the source of all light, makes Himself visible to all the worlds and makes all things visible to them through His light.⁵³ It is true that in His essential original form He can neither be seen nor comprehended by the ordinary vision. Yet He assumes a material form in order to make Himself visible to the sensual observation of all the worlds. It is for this reason that He is here described by the epithet ‘Darsata’, ‘the visible one’. And it is in Dyu-loka, the highest heavens, far beyond all the worlds of darkness and gloom, that He shines in His blazing radiance. Hence it is that He is here

described by the attribute 'Paro-rajas', 'the one beyond all gloom'. That person who realises this truth about the final foot of Gayatri gains the lustre and vigour of the Brahman Himself.

It is on the fourth foot, which is described as "beyond all the worlds of darkness" and as "that which is visible, that Gayatri is established. This seat of Gayatri is itself Satya-loka, the world of Truth. Thus Gayatri is established on Truth.

What is truth? What is personally and directly observed, or 'witnessed' as we say, is the truth; and the eye is, therefore, the only proper means to the discovery of the truth. Between one who claims to have observed a fact himself and one who has merely heard of it, we attach authenticity only to the claim of the eye-witness. Seeing is believing. Hearsay is no evidence. But then, it may be that even the eye misleads us. Hence the authenticity and dependability of observation depends upon one's power of vision, which in turn depends upon one's vitality and vigour. Thus, in the ultimate analysis power would mean the vital principle itself. So it is that the knowing one's declare that power takes precedence over truth itself. For of what avail is truth to one who has not the power either to see it or comprehend it? The five senses have been termed 'gayas'. Gayatri is so named because it feeds and nourishes the senses by conferring the vital force on us. Gayatri itself is the principal life-force residing in the body. It is this same Gayatri about which the Preceptor teaches to his disciple at the latter's invitation. It is then designated 'Savitri'. That person who realises all this truth about Gayatri will gain Gayatri itself for his protector, Gayatri gives him life-power and longevity, strength vigour and, above all, the power to observe and comprehend all truth.

Some preceptors teach Savitri in the Anushtup metre as Anushtup is the native form of speech. But this practice is not considered proper. It is laid down that Savitri should be taught only in the Gayatri metre. He who realises the value of this prescription gains such blessings through a single foot of Gayatri

as will exceed all comparison. The greatest gift that he may be able to secure by other means will be quite insignificant and worthless by contrast.

He who seeks only the material wealth of the three worlds gains for his reward only the initial foot of Gayatri. The aspirant who wants the treasure of the Vedic lore gains the second foot of Gayatri. One who aspires after animal wealth acquires the third foot. But peerless is the wealth that is attained by the person who has realised the fourth foot of Gayatri which is 'visible' through its divine radiance and which shines far above all the worlds of gloom. For this wealth is the wealth of the spirit. And the realisation of the final foot of Gayatri is possible only through meditation and spiritual communion.

He who has achieved perfect realisation of the truth of Gayatri even if he has unconsciously committed some sin or other, will be able to burn it all down to ashes through the fire of his virtue. Such a person is pure, ageless and immortal. His power to burn down all sin is not surprising inasmuch as the very face of Gayatri is Agni (*i e.*, in the aspect of Aditya).

Even as the Brhad-aranyaka describes the entire nature of Gayatri both in its manifest and in its unmanifest forms, the Chandogya eulogises the all-pervasive character of Gayatri whose power and influence extend over all the worlds. Thus the Chandogya says that Vak or the goddess of speech is herself Gayatri. She sings about all universal existences and she protects them too. That is why she is called Gayatri.

The Chandogya mentions two modes of approach for the realisation of Gayatri. The first is to realise that all the worlds lying outside of us like the earth and the heavens are but different manifestations of Gayatri. And, after comprehending this truth, one should meditate on this aspect of Gayatri. The second mode is to realise that all the inner faculties of man and, above all, the spirit within him are also different manifestations of Gayatri. This realisation is a spiritual experience rather than an intellectual exercise. And, after

such a realisation is attained, one must dwell on this aspect of Gayatri in the innermost recesses of one's spiritual being.

The description of this four-footed Gayatri which pervades the whole universe and transcends it is the description of the sublime nature of the Supreme Being Himself. After describing the Cosmic Form of the Supreme Being, the Rk Samhita text says, "Such is the sublime nature of this (Being). (Indeed) His greatness is greater still. The entire universe with all its existences is for Him the measure of one step. The immortality of his third step lies in Heaven"(X 90.3). The Upanishads declare that the Rk Samhita description of the Supreme Being is itself the description of the true nature of Gayatri. Thus this description is said to establish identity between the Supreme Being and Gayatri.

In the description of this identity between Gayatri and the Para-Brahman, there is, however, a slight divergence between the versions of the Brhad Aranyaka and the Chandogya, all the elements that compose the Universe and all the beings thereof, the three Vedas, the earth, our body and mind are all part and parcel of the first foot of the transcendental reality expressing itself as Gayatri. This foot has a form, a tangible, visible shape. In other words, it is perceptible to the physical observation of beings who live in the material universe. But the other three feet are ageless; their abode is the highest Heaven; and their form is immaterial. Hence they are imperceptible to sensual observation and incomprehensible even to the mind. They can be comprehended only by spiritual vision.

The Brhad Aranyaka variation is that the first three feet of Gayatri embrace the three worlds and manifest themselves both as Vak or speech in such forms as Rk, and as the vital principles, Prana, Apana and Vyana. These three feet have a form which is perceptible to the world's sensual observation and intellectual comprehension. And it is the Turiya pada, the final foot, the ultimate, that is immanent in Aditya and thus abides in the highest Heaven.

But this variation in these two accounts relating to Gayatri is but a difference of detail and not one of substance. The central theme, common to both, is the fact of the identity between Gayatri and the ultimate reality.

The term "Turiya" in the forgoing description has here a technical signification; and it is in this sense that it occurs in certain passages of the Mandukya and the Commentaries thereon. In those passages we have a metaphysical discussion about the nature of the ultimate reality. In that context, identity is postulated between the individual soul, the Atman and the universal soul, the Parabrahman.⁵⁴ The waking and other states that are described there relate, therefore, to the Para Brahman Himself or, more explicitly, to the individual soul which is but an expression of the Para Brahman. The Atman is the Absolute Reality, the Para Brahman, designated by the esoteric symbol Om. He is, at the same time, the Relative Reality, the Apra Brahman.

This Atman is figuratively described as having four feet. The analysis of the first three feet is a sort of unfigurative elaboration of the symbolic description of the Relative aspect of the Atman. The description runs thus—

The Atman is: (i) jagarita sthano – bahishprjnah, one who, having a waking state, is outwardly conscious;

(ii) swapna sthano-antahprajnah, one who, having a dream state, is inwardly conscious; and

(iii) sushupta sthana-ekibhutah, one who having a sushupti or dreamless state, has become one (with all); or, alternatively, one who, in the dreamless state, has become single and absolute. In this state, the Atman is said to be the Knower, the Wise One, Prajna, inasmuch as he is Prajnana-ghana, true knowledge congealed and crystallised.

(iv) The explanation of the fourth foot is the description of the absolute aspect of the Atman. It runs thus: "Him whom (the knowing) regard as neither inwardly conscious neither way; as one who is unperceived and who cannot be dealt with (on the

sensual level); and as one who, in this fourth state of his, is full of peace, who is auspicious and who is without a second (i.e., who is unique); he indeed is the Atman (in his original nature) and he must be realised as such."

The upshot of this analysis is that the Atman has a fourth supersensual form which is beyond sensual comprehension, a form which far excels his lesser three states which alone can be perceived and recognised in the ordinary way through physical faculties.

It is this very Atman whom the Brhad-Aranyaka eulogises as the all-seeing witness of all the worlds, who himself is unseen by the world; and as one who hears all but is beyond the hearing of the world.⁵⁵

The import of these discussions applies without any material variation to the present context, where the Para Brahman in his manifestation as Gayatri is described. Examination of the Rk Samhita texts reveals that, even here, the term 'Turiya' in the above-mentioned sense of the un-earthly, supersensual form of reality.

The Rk mantra beginning "*Esh-sya-bhanuh* ..." describes Aditya's journey.⁵⁶ His chariot is said to contain four kinds of 'anna' or victuals. Three of these kinds are ordinarily and directly perceptible. But sweeter far than these three is the Turiyanna, the fourth variety of victuals (termed 'madhu' in the Brhad-Aranyaka and other works), lustrous in its immaterial essence. This madhu, distinguished from the other three forms, is self-luminous and unique. Even as the supreme being within Aditya shines in his golden glory which incomparably transcends the radiance of the sun, the luminosity of this madhu also has a transcendental lustre of its own.

The Rk text beginning "*Svarbhanoradha* . . . (V. 40. 6)" declares that the sage Atri destroyed four kinds of darkness through four kinds of penance and, by so doing, he was able to realise the radiant splendour previously enveloped in those forms of darkness. This description also corresponds to the relation of how

the light of the sun which is perceptible even to the physical senses is ordinarily seen by all the world. And it is uniform to all eyes. But the essential glory of Aditya is beyond sensual observation and even beyond intellectual comprehension. For its realisation is needed the aid of mantras and the special type of spiritual meditation inspired by them. Even so, the forms of darkness which have been mentioned in the passage about the sage Atri are evidently symbolic of different degree of ignorance. And Aditya in the original glory can be realised only through the spiritual contemplation of the Turiya or the fourth and final mantras.

Again, the mantras beginning "*Chamushas-syenah-sakuno . .*" enshrines the eulogy of Chandra-loka. The gist of this text is that Soma, who serves all the heavens, served the Chandra-loka which is beyond the Surya-loka itself. Different upanishads give diverse accounts of this Chandra-loka. But in order to make it clear that it is the highest world, transcending all material worlds, Sayana explains that it is present beyond the Surya-loka (Surya-lokasyopari-vartamane). Even in this passage the term 'Turiya' is used to designate the highest world described as Chandra-loka. In short, the attribute 'Turiya' has been repeatedly used in Rk passages to refer to and designate eternal reality transcending all material worlds.

But although the turiya or the final fourth part in all these foregoing accounts is said to excel and transcend the other three, it should not be understood as something different from them. The description merely means that the same cosmic principle pervades all the material universe and, at the same time, transcends it and lives beyond. As the Purusha-sukta text says, the same Supreme Being embraces the entire universe and, having transcended the universe, stands ten inches beyond. It is needless to state that the 'ten inches' referred to here is merely figurative and symbolic. The significance of the description is that the eternal reality is immanent and all-pervasive and, at the same time transcendental.

That being who dwells in the lotus of the heart and who is the consumer of the food that is eaten is himself the consumer of all; he is Time, he is Aditya, the Divine Cosmic Light. All-pervading space, extending limitless in all directions, is the lotus of the heart. The four principal directions and the four sub-directions are the petals of this lotus of space. The Atman dwelling in the lotus and Aditya dwelling in the Heavens are situated face to face. This great truth must be contemplated with the aid of three mystic terms 'Bhuh', and 'Bhuvah' and 'Svah'; of the mystic symbol pranava which has the form of the sacred triple letter Om; and of the recitation of the Gayatri mantra, tat-savituh-varenyam, in the form of Savitri. Such is the injunction of the Rk and other texts.⁵⁷

The differentiation, Bhuh, Bhuvah and Svah is a description of the nature of Pranava and Gayatri, even as it is of the Light of all lights, namely, the Brahman. It is only for purposes of practical convenience that the division and differentiation of the Brahman as the end to be attained and the Gayatri and Pranava as the means for such attainment is made in these texts. But the Sruti unambiguously declares that the truth to be grasped is that, in the real sense, the end to be attained and the means to be adopted towards that end are one and the same thing, and not two different things.

The important point to be noted, therefore, is that to realise the supreme reality, the transcendental cosmic light, the means to be adopted should also be the same supreme reality. Like end, like means. This means assume the form of meditation. What, then, is the nature of the supreme Light, the highest reality, which is the end to be attained, and what is the nature of that Light which is the means, namely, Pranava and Gayatri? What is the procedure and form of the meditation to be adopted for the realisation of the Supreme Light? Finally, can it be stated that the same great mantra, 'tat-savituh...' comprehends the end to be attained, the means to be adopted and the meditation to be pursued as well? These are the

questions which have now to be examined by way of concluding this inquiry.

In the early part of this work a relatively detailed account is given of the three worlds which are the abodes of the three Spheres of Light, Agni, Vayu and Aditya. The appropriateness of the attributes 'Keshin' and 'Trayah-Keshinah', describing the nature of the Cosmic Light, the Lord of the Cosmos, is also discussed in considerable detail.⁵⁸ Sruti texts like 'Yatra-jyotirajasram' (IX. 113. 7) also contain the eulogy of the Brahman, the Supreme Light. These texts convey the fact that the Brahman abides in the three worlds called, Bhuh, Bhuvah and Svah. And he manifests himself in three forms, namely Agni, Vayu and Aditya. Alternative names are also employed to designate these three forms of the Brahman. Some worship the Brahman as Agni, Vayu and Aditya, while some others worship him as Kala, Prana and Anna, and still others adore him as Brahma, Rudra and Vishnu.⁵⁹

Many Sruti texts declare that, just as the Para-Brahman who is the Paranjyoti has taken the forms of Agni, Vayu and Aditya, even so Pranava compounded of Vyahrtis or mystic words manifests itself as the three worlds, Bhuh, Bhuvah and Svah which are the abodes of Agni, Vayu and Aditya. Thus the Srutis are of the definite view that pranava is the Para Brahman Himself not a thing different. The Upanishads too describe that the Para Brahman, as Pranava, assumes three forms and is designated and known in three different ways in accordance with time, place and form. It is also explained in the Upanishads that the Pranava itself is eulogised as the Para Brahman by the Gayatri in its Savitri form. From these discussions emerges the fact that Gayatri composed of mystic sound symbols and Pranava also compounded of mystic sound symbols are mere differentiated names of the same principle, namely the Brahman.

The mystic utterance Om, called the Pranava is the very soul of the Brahman whose form is light and whose name is

Aditya. The ingredients of Pranava are three sounds, अ, उ and म.⁶⁰ These sacred symbols are the warp and woof that form the fabric of all the worlds. Hence the Cosmic spirit Aditya should be worshipped as Pranava.

Pranava the embodied form of the Brahman has three modified manifestations, which may be called his organs or component parts. The following Table gives these modified forms of the Pranava.

Feminine	Masculine	Neuter	Distinguishing Characteristic
1. Agni	Vayu	Aditya	Radiance or Light
2. Bramha	Rudra	Vishnu	(Cosmic) Lordship
3. Garhapatya	Dakshinagni	Ahavaniya	Form of sacrifice
4. Rk	Yajus	Sama	Form of Knowledge
5. Bhuh	Bhuvah	Svah	Form of words
6. Past	Present	Future	Form of time
7. Prana	Agni	Surya	Form of Might & Vigour (or Energy)
8. Anna	Apah	Chandramah	Form of Development (or Growth)
9. Buddhi	Manah	Ahamkara	Form of Consciousness (or Sentience)
10. Prana	Apana	Vyana	Form of Life (or Vitality)

The components of the Brahman are the components of Pranava. Hence it is that the Brahman should be meditated and adored as Pranava. The entire universe is the embodied form of the mystic particles which compose the Pranava. It is for this reason that the Brahman should be contemplated and worshipped by means of the Prayerful mantra 'Tat Savituh....', dedicated to Him in his form and designation of Savita.

Two points deserve to be noted in these descriptions. First, it is declared that all the three worlds, the earth, the skies, and the all-high Heaven were all created by the utterance of the mystic particles, Bhuh, Bhuvah and Svah. Second, it is enjoined upon us that, for this very reason, the

pursuit of the Brahman should be made by means of the same mystic particles, Bhuh, Bhuvah and Svah.

What is the mode of seeking to realise the Brahman by aid of these mystic utterances? The mantras first give a graphic description of the Brahman before and after Creation in order to enable the seeker to concentrate on the object of his meditation. It is stated that in the beginning, the universe was formless and undifferentiated. The Supreme Being, who is the eternal reality, assumed the form of prajapati, the Creator, performed penance (that is to say, conceived in his imaginative vision the image of the universe He willed to create), and then gave form to the Universe and differentiated all its objects. The newly-created universe was the material, embodied form of Prajapati. Aditya loka, the highest Heaven was the head and crown of the Creator's body. Antariksha or the lower Heavens was his navel (*i.e.*, the centre of his body). And the earth was his feet. His form of Aditya, the Primeval Light, was the eye which was the instrument of His observation. In other words, Prajapati, as Aditya or the Divine Light, surveyed all His creation.

If this sublime image is first formed in the seeker's mind, then the procedure for the realisation of the Brahman can be easily grasped. The Rk mantra says, "Tat savituh – varenyam iti – asau – va – Adityah – Savita ahuh – Brahmavadinah". The first step, it is here pointed out, is to realise that the object to be worshipped is the radiant light of Savita. Savita is none other than Aditya who dwells in the highest Heaven, the abode of Light. He who is after self – realisation must first understand the nature and form of Savita and then set about his task of attaining Him.

The second step is indicated in the mantra "Bhargo – Devasya – dhimahi – iti – Savita – vai – Devah iti – ahuh – Brahmavadinah". Savita Himself is the Para Brahman. Therefore let us endeavour to realise His 'Bhargha' His ineffable effulgence. And, concentrating on that, let us contemplate

Him and, through communion, let us attain Him. Such is the injunction of the text.

The Brahnavadins, the Knowers of the Brahman, have declared, the Maitri Upanishad goes on to explain, that the final step is to pray to the Savita for His own grace and guidance. May the Savita grant us the power to know Him! May He grant us the Spiritual consciousness to realise Him! For only by the grace of the Supreme Lord can we succeed in the endeavour to know Him and attain Him. He is the means and He is the end too. This is the interpretation of the Rk texts given by the Maitri Upanishad.

The Mandukya declares, "Sarvam - Om Kara - eva", "All is but Om Kara" Commenting on this, Bhagavan Sankara says, All things whatever belonging to the universe that are differentiated by form and name and hence bear diverse designations are charged with Omkara. And the process of differentiation and designation is also Om Kara. The Para Brahman too is Om Kara, as it is made, known to us in the form of Abhidhana and Abhidheya, the name and the named, which are the two means to realising Him. The history of the sacred symbol Om, which is the Brahman Himself in his Para and Apra manifestations (*i.e.*, in his absolute and formless manifestation and his relative, embodied manifestation) is itself the means to the realisation of the Brahman." Thus Sankaracharya establishes identity between the Pranava and the Brahman.⁶¹

Taittiriya texts confirm Sankara's interpretation through their ample and elaborate description. "Om-iti-Brahma. Om-iti-idam-sarvam Brahmaiva-upapnoti", says a passage. Om (Or Pranava) indeed is the Brahman. All this (universe) is indeed Om. Om is verily the end to be pursued. That is why the reciters of the Saman and the Adhvaryus at the sacrifice commence their pratigara or auspicious incantation with Om. The novice who intends to study the Vedas attains the Brahman Himself through the repetition of Om Kara. Om is nothing but the Supreme Soul. So it is that the Paramatman Himself is gained by contemplating Om Kara and through its repetition.

Immortal and fearless is the nature of Pranava or Omkara. The very gods gained fearlessness and immortality by resorting to it. Hence those who realise this fact and resort to the utterance of this sacred sound become immortal and fearless. Thus the Chandogya eulogises the Pranava.⁶²

That condition of mind, that kind of meditation and that spirit of communion which are essential for the realisation of the Brahman are possible only through the beneficial influence shed by Pranava. This truth is indicated in the Rk mantra, “Yunjate – mana – uta – yunjate”, “(The seeker) fixeth the mind, verily doth he fix it”. How the Pranava can confer upon the seeker the condition of mind and spirit leading to is explained by means of a figurative illustration. The Pranava is a bow. The Atman (*i.e.*, the seeker’s spirit) is the arrow. The Brahman is the target. This target should be hit with the utmost care and the surest aim. The least relaxation of effort, the least little diversion of attention is fatal to the purpose on hand. As the arrow is fixed on the target, even so should the mind and spirit of the seeker be concentrated on the Brahman. It is the bow that is primarily responsible for the success of the arrow in hitting the target straight. Even So the Atman is also to go straight and get lost in its target of Akshara or the immortal bliss of the Brahman. This is by virtue of the bow called Pranava which shoots the arrow of the Atman. It is thus that Pranava, as the aid and means of meditation resulting in realisation, is eulogised.⁶³

The mystic particles अ, उ and म which are the constituent parts of Pranava and of Gayatri and which represent the three worlds Bhuh, Bhuvah and Svah enable the person who resorts to them in his meditation on the supreme being to immerge into and be lost in the flood light of Aditya. As the serpent casts off its slough and becomes renewed, even does this kind of seeker becomes completely free from all sins and thus becomes a pure soul. And through the recitation of the Saman, he is transported to the world of Brahman. He attains the vision of the supreme soul who is far higher than all the infinite

mass of life in the worlds and who dwells in the inmost recesses of the heart.⁶⁴

He who pursues the Brahman through such spiritual meditation and communion gains sway over the earth by the aid of the Rk mantras. By the aid of the Yajus he gains the lower heavens. By the Saman he gains the Aditya loka, the highest heaven. But by the aid of Pranava or Omkara he realises that eternal principle which is ageless and deathless and fearless, which is peace itself and which is higher than the highest, dwelling as it does behind the beyond. Pranava has this supreme potency and virtue because it is a principle co-ordinating and harmonising Rk, Yajus and Saman, all at once.⁶⁵

It has thus been shown that Pranava and Gayatri are of Co-ordinate nature and function. From the stand-point of practical convenience, it is true that Pranava has been called the antecedent and Gayatri the consequent. In other words, a certain order in time has been stipulated for purposes of recitation. Pranava, in this sense, takes precedence over Gayatri. But this time sequence is not indicative of any difference either in nature or in function or in status. The nature, power and influence of both Pranava and Gayatri are the same.

That Pranava and Gayatri which are the means to the realisation of the Brahman are also the forms of the Brahman has now been established beyond any ambiguity. It is now necessary to turn to the examination of certain other questions relating to Pranava and Gayatri. The vyahrtis or mystic particles are, we have now learnt, the diverse world-manifestations of the para Brahman designated as Savita. They are also the common constituents of both Pranava and Gayatri. But what is the nature of these vyahrtis? How many are their diverse forms? And how can they be used as the instrument in the process of that spiritual meditation which is informed by and infused with the spirit of Pranava?

The Maitri Upanishad gives an account of how the mystic constituents of Pranava, अ, उ and म become transformed and differentiated into male, female and neuter forms. Even the Taittiriya gives the same sort of analysis and classification with some little variation. But the analysis given in the Taittiriya has been regarded as of greater value from the standpoint of the efficacy of spiritual meditation. Bhagavan Sankaracharya has also ascribed the weight of a greater spiritual authority to the Taittiriya classification and has explained it in elaborate detail.

The mode of contemplation for the inward pursuit of the Brahman as represented by the Vyahrtis, through which can be attained Svarajya or identity with the self-refulgent Brahman, is thus laid down. To begin with, it must be clearly and firmly realised that Bhuh, and Bhuvah and Suvah are the constituent Vyahrtis. It must be recalled and pondered over that the sage Mahachamasya discovered for himself the fourth supreme vyahrti⁶⁶ called Mahah. For the recollection of the seer is an essential part of the seeker's contemplative quest. This fourth Vyahrti, designated Mahah is itself the Brahman. It is the all-pervasive Atman. All the rest are but part and parcel of it.

The Atman himself is the supreme particle, the Maha-Vyahrti called Mahah. Aditya, Chandra, Brahma and Anna are his constituent parts. The earth and other worlds, all the gods, the vedas and the pranas or vital principles are pervaded by the Atman represented by the particle, Mahah. Thus all these are the ingredient parts of Mahah. The mantra, "Anganyanya Devatah" speaks of the Devatas or the gods as parts of Mahah. But this should be taken only as an *illustrative* description of Mahah rather than an *exhaustive* description (upalakshana). The gods are mentioned as the best instance of the constituents of Mahah. All the substances composing the universe or contained therein and pervaded by the Atman are included in Mahah.

This fact is borne out by the mantra, "Taa - vaa - etah - Chatasrah - Chaturdha", "All these four are composed of, and

resolvable into, four parts." Thus Bhuh is made up of the earth, Agni, the Rks and the vital principle, Prana. Bhuvah comprises Antariksha, Vayu, the Saman and Apana. Suvah is composed of Dyu-loka, Aditya, Yajus and Vyana. But Mahah embraces:

(i) Aditya. It is through Aditya that all the worlds grow and become big.

(ii) Chandra. It is through Chandra that all the heavenly spheres of light grow great.

(iii) Brahma. It is Brahma who is primarily responsible for the development of all things.

(iv) Anna. It is Anna which is the cause of the existence and growth of all beings.

He who thus realises the nature of the four Vyahrthis has indeed realised the nature of the Brahman Himself. Hence all the gods are said to serve him. The Taittiriya says, "Chatsrah – chatsro – Vyahrtayah ... balim – avahanti," "These vyahrtis are four, each having four elements. He who has known them has known the Brahman. All the gods fetch for such a person (every) blessing."

The next thing to consider is the mode of approach to be adopted by the seeker in order to realise the Brahman of whom all the other gods of the three worlds Bhuh, Bhuvah and Suvah are but parts. The Taittiriya says that the supreme being dwells in the inner heaven of the heart. He is manomaya, the quintessence of mind and spirit; amrita, immortal, and hiranmaya, the being of golden effulgence. The seeker who contemplates this being within him becomes thereby established in the Agni known as Bhuh, in the Vayu called Bhuvah, in the Aditya termed Suvah and in the Brahman denominated by the supreme particle, Mahah. He attains Swarajya, indentivity with the supreme self. He becomes the lord of mind. He gains mastery over all forms of speech, over all senses like sight and hearing and over all types of Vijnana, knowledge informed by truth. Above all, he becomes one with and indistinguishable

from the Brahman himself, inasmuch as he is established firmly in the Brahman whose body is all space, who is the informing spirit of all things, who is the thrill of all life, who is the bliss of all mind, who is the inexhaustible fountain of peace and who, above all, is the very spirit of immortality.

Reposing in the Vyahrtis with the feeling of being himself the Atman, the seeker at last becomes the Brahman himself and attains the bliss of such union. He is then the king of all. As the Brahman is the lord of all gods who are part of him, this realised seeker is also the lord of all.

Since such a seeker becomes joy itself, since he gains eternal peace of mind and since he becomes deathless, the Taittiriya enjoins upon Prachinayogya, the worthy disciple of antiquity, to pursue the Brahman by spiritual contemplation of the Vyahrtis.

Thus the Srutis have sung the praise of the Pranava and Gayatri as the direct instruments for the realisation of the eternal cosmic spirit in as much as they are composed of the Vyahrtis and hence pervade all the worlds symbolised by these mystic letters. Just as the sublime Gayatri is eulogised as the potent principle that sings as well as protects, even so the pranava represented by Omkara has also been similarly eulogised. "Om - iti - etat - aksharam - udgihtam - upasita. Om - iti - hi - udgayati," says the Chandogya. The text commands that the sacred word Om which is also the song sent up (to the Brahman) should be contemplated with inwardness of soul. Om sings of the Cosmic Principle called the Brahman and thus gives Him its musical praise. Indeed, the all-pervasive Brahman Himself abides in this udgitha, song lifted up to the All-High.

The Udgitha is Pranava and Pranava Udgitha. And Aditya Himself is Udgitha the Pranava too. The supreme being who dwells in the heart is in the same form there as Aditya or the Brahman who is otherwise known as Pranava or Udgitha.⁶⁷ This is how the Chandogya describes the synonymous significance of these terms. It goes on to add that, just as the transcendental

principle disports itself in the Aditya loka in the form of song, even so does the same principle dwelling in the heart also disport itself as song and is known by the same name. What all this amounts to is that the supreme deity who assumes this musical form must be contemplated and sought after only through Pranava and the sublime mantra, Gayathri, which are musical in form and whose function is to preserve the cosmos.⁶⁸

Thus the aim of the Gayatri mantra, preceded by the repetition of the mystic term Om or Pranava, is to meditate upon the unique radiance of Savita as a means to realising Him. For, as all the foregoing accounts have repeatedly revealed, that eternal principle, which creates all this universe, through which all existences that are created are able to live and in which they are all, at the time of the great dissolution, become absorbed is describable synonymously by the terms Brahman or Savita. And all these accounts agree on the second fact that the recitation of Gayatri, preceded by Pranava, is the best means to the attainment of the knowledge of the Brahman.

The Literal Explanation of the Gayatri Mantra with comments thereon :

The text of the Gayatri is – “Tat – savituh – varenyam Bhargo – Devasya – dhimahi – Dhiyo – yonah – Prachodayaat”.

Tat :

In interpreting this mantra,⁶⁹ two different grammatical relations are suggested for the word ‘Tat’. Some take it as the epithet of the word ‘Savituh’ and others have considered it the attribute of ‘Bhargah’. Despite this divergence, both the interpretations amount to the same thing.

If ‘Tat’ is related to ‘Savituh’, then since the noun substantive ‘Savituh’ in genitive singular, ‘Tat’ would come to have the singular meaning ‘Tasya’. The relation of the words would thus be – ‘tasya – devasya – Savituh – Bhargah etc.’ ‘the radiance of that (Supreme) Deity Savita’. Or ‘Tasya’ by itself

would mean 'Brahmanah', 'Of the Brahman' – For the term 'Tat' itself denotes the Brahman.⁷⁰ For in interpreting the colophon at the end of every adhyaya or chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, Sri Ramanuja says, "Tat – Sabdo – hi – Brahmavachi – Prasiddhah", "It is well known that the term 'Tat' itself means the Brahman". And Sri Sankara, in the same context, comments, "Tat – iti – Brahmabhidhanam – uchcharya", "having mentioned the designation of the Brahman by the usage of the term 'tat'." Again, numerous are the passages of the Upanishads where the term, 'Tat' is used as the equivalent of the term 'Brahman'. Among these the most famous passage is – 'Tat – twam – asi, Svetaketo'. Here, as all interpretations agree, 'tat' is the Brahman, 'twam' means the individual soul. Hence the mantra 'Tat – twam – asi' means 'Thou art That' and thus it identifies the Jiva with the Brahman or the Individual with the Supreme Soul.

Everywhere, the term 'Tat' denotes the Supreme Being, the Brahman who is All-Knowing, who is of true will and who is the cause of the cosmos. Passages such as "Tat – aikshata...." also bear out the foregoing interpretation. For there too 'tat' stands for the Brahman. In the Chandogya, the passage "Tat – jalan – iti...."⁷¹ has been called the "Tat – Kratumaya" passage, that is to say, the section dealing with sacrifice(s) to the Brahman (or of the Brahman). The Taittiriya texts, "Om – tat – Brahma," "Om – tat – Vayuh" and "Om – tat – Atma" also express the same truth, namely, that 'Tat' means the Brahman.

Hence in the text of the Gayatri mantra too, since the term 'Tat' is synonymous with the Brahman, it has been used as the attribute of Savita, the Para Brahman. So 'tat – Savituh' should be understood as 'tasya – Savituh', 'belonging to that Savita, the Brahman.' This is one view.

The second view is that the term 'Tat' is the epithet describing 'Bhargah'. Bhatta Bhaskara, commenting on the Gayatri mantra which is quoted in the Taittiriya Aranyaka, says

that the mantra has been interpreted in the section 'Sam-pasyami....' of the Taittiriya Samhita. Then he proceeds to the interpretation of the text of the Gayatri mantra. There is a slight difference between the Aranyaka and Samhita interpretations. In the first the commentator considers the term 'Tat' as an epithet of the term 'Bhargah'⁷² and describes this as the radiance of Savita, the Creator of the Cosmos, which is known to and is to be worshipped by all the worlds. But in the interpretation of the Taittiriya Samhita Passage, he expresses the view that 'Tat' should be related to 'Savituh' and so should be understood as "Tasya Savituh", "of the Brahman, namely, Savita."

This difference in the interpretation of the two passages is not one of substance, after all. The meaning of the mantra, as a whole, is not altered whether the first or the second grammatical order is construed as preferable.

In the texts like 'Jyotisham - Joytihi', the Brahman is identified with Light itself. The whole discussion thus imports that the same supreme principle is denoted by two different names. Hence if the term 'Tat' is related to 'Savituh', it would mean 'Tasya - jagatprerakasya Savituh', 'belonging to that Savita who is the Creator of the universe'. But if it is related to the term 'Bhargah' then it would mean 'Jagatprasiddham - jyothi' 'the Light that is known to the whole universe'.

Savituh :

What the term 'Savitr' denotes has been described in the foregoing discussions and it has been shown that the Para Brahman Himself is termed 'Savitr'. One way in which 'Savitr' has been explained as that Aditya Himself is 'Savitr', as he is the generator of the rains which bring content and joy to all the worlds.

The formula "Sauti - sakala - sreyaamsi", "He confers (upon the worshipper) all blessings," brings out the significance of the term 'Savitr' in yet another way. Thus the term 'Savitr' can

be interpreted in diverse ways in accordance with diverse derivations.

Varenyam :

The Rk Samhita shows how Savitr is 'Varenya', the Being fit to be aspired after and sought, fit to be pursued and chosen, fit to be attained.

Savitr, the Arch-Poet (and Creator) embraces and wears in His own being the configurations of all the worlds. It is He who procreates all species of creatures, bi-ped and quadruped or other, and who confers upon them all things auspicious. It is He too that makes all creatures instinct with consciousness. Hence it is that He is Varenya⁷³ fit to be elected for adoration and fit to be attained.

This description corresponds closely to the eulogy contained in Upanishadic utterances like "Tasya – bhasa – sarvam – idam – vibhati", "It is by His Light that all this (Universe) is illumined." The Upanishads also declare that Savitr Himself is the lord of all the affairs of the Universe. He is the Protector and Guardian of the whole Universe. He is the Prime cause of the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the Universe.⁷⁴ Thus Savitr has been shown to be the Supreme transcendental deity.

Other Upanishadic utterances like "Devaya Savitre Satya-prasavaya" describes the nature of Savitr in more elaborate detail.⁷⁵ Savitr, who inspires consciousness in all creatures, at first composed his mind and willed to give birth to truth. Then he spread the radiance of Agni over all cosmos. It is for this reason that the Sruti text enjoins, "Yunjate – mana – uta – yuryate – dhiyo – Vipra Viprasya – brhato – vipaschitah," Bent is the mind and fixed indeed are the intellectual powers of that person who, having observed well and widely, is the knower (of Reality)." In other words, in laying down the mode of seeking to attain the supreme being who is the cause of the Universe, the mantra declares that this cause is *Savitr*, manifesting himself as the Divine Light.

It is also declared that Savitr is revered in the highest degree by the whole universe just because it is through Him that all blessings sought after are obtained by His grace alone and because He, in the form of Light, is the most sacred Being. He is the soul of the Universe, He is Truth, He is the abode of enjoyment, bliss and peace. Hence the only object fit to be heard of, borne in mind and meditated upon is this Divine Light.

Bhargah :

‘Bhargah’ denotes that supernal Light of Savitr which is worthy of quest, pursuit and attainment. It has been so named because it destroys ignorance, sin which springs therefrom and sorrow that springs from sin. The Maitri Upanishad explains the significance of this term thus:—

(1) ‘Bhah’ means radiant ray. Aditya’s light has been called ‘Bhargah’ because its movement is in the form of such rays and because his all – pervasiveness is due to this movement of the rays. This is one interpretation.⁷⁶

(2) The Brahmavadins hold the view that it is Rudra who is called Bhargah inasmuch as He dissolves the Universe.⁷⁷

(3) Another interpretation seeks to reveal the mystic significance of all the three letters, Bha, ra, and ga coalesce in the word ‘Bhargah’ – (i) ‘Bha’ stands for ‘Bhasayati’; it signifies that Savitr illumines all the worlds by his unparalleled radiance; (ii) ‘Ra’ stands for ‘Ranjayati’, it signifies that Savitr delights all the worlds and makes them happy by His sat – chit – ananda nature (or by virtue of His being Existence – Consciousness – Bliss); (iii) ‘Ga’ denotes both ‘Gachchanti’ and ‘Agachchanti’; it signifies that it is in the Para Brahman that all existences, whether in the state of dreamless sleep or at the time of dissolution, become lost, and it is from Him too that, as the time of waking, whether from sleep or the unmanifest state, all existences emerge.⁷⁸

Thus the Para – Brahman is the Supreme Being in whom all the three elements ‘Bha’, ‘Ra’, and ‘Ga’ have become

fused together and He it is that harmonises all. It is for this reason that He is called 'Bharga'.

Other commentators interpret 'Bharga' as 'Radiance' or 'Food' or 'Wealth'. These interpretations too are true and have to be adopted in different contexts. In the present context, however, they tend to narrow down the significance of the term 'Bharga'. Hence a wider significance is to be preferred.

Devasya:

Savitr is called 'Deva' because he dwells in the All-High Heaven, because he is the 'Shining One', and because His is a sporting nature.⁷⁹ In other words, this attribute is an appropriate description of Savitr because He delights eternally manifesting His joy in sport (the sport of creation, maintenance and dissolution of the Cosmos), or, indeed, because He is joy itself.

The Srutis have declared that this Being who is joy itself has Moda and Pramoda for his two fortnights. In other words, He manifests His Bliss in enjoyment and more enjoyment in the two fortnights (of the month). That is to say, eternal joy, revealed in eternal sport and enjoyments, is the nature of the Para Brahman. It is this unique characteristic of Savitr that is denoted by the term 'Deva'.

Other texts like 'Brahmajajnam - devam - idyam veditva', 'Atmaratihi, Atma - Krida yasya - visva - upasate' also eulogise this blissful nature of Savitr.

Dhimahi:

'Dhimahi' has been explained as 'Let us contemplate or meditate upon' or as 'Let us bear (His image) in mind.' In other words, the term 'Dhimahi' signifies that we should ever bear the image of Savitr in mind as the one object fit to be contemplated and meditated upon. The need and the value of meditation has already been discussed in detail. So Savitr should be realised only through the process of spiritual meditation.

The Taittiriya Upanishad commends as the means of realisation that kind of spiritual meditation and communion in which the seeker vows to cross all the limitations of the worlds of opposites and, having realised the Brahman, himself to become one with and indistinguishable from the Brahman - "Aham - visvamSuvarna jyotihi". The mortal becomes immortal by virtue of this meditation instinct with the knowledge of the Brahman. As Aditya shines in the heavens, so does he shine with the divine radiance of the Brahman.

Dhiyah :

In order to attain the sense of identity with the Brahman, two things are indispensable - (i) the knowledge that the self and the Brahman are indeed one; and (ii) the act of meditation through which alone the sense of *union* can be achieved. The Gayatri embodies the prayer that Savitr may inspire in the seeker that 'Dhi' which gives him both these requisites of self-realisation. 'Dhi' here means both discriminating sense, the power of the intellect illumined with the light of the soul, and the power of action assuming the form of spiritual meditation and leading to realisation, to the sense of oneness with the Brahman. Prajna, or knowledge is necessary because only through it can Avidya or ignorance can be destroyed. And this Prajna can be attained only through the Karma of upasana or through the act of seeking the Brahman through contemplation. Thus there is no inconsistency between the two interpretations of the term 'Dhi' given above. On the contrary, the two hold together as knowledge and action are complementary and interdependent. Nor would it be an error to interpret 'Dhi' as praise, inasmuch as the act of meditation on Savitr involves his praise.

Right action, Right knowledge and Right Praise are all one. The co-operation of knowledge and action, if not their identity, is described in the Taittiriya Upanishad in the passage - "Vijnanam yajnam tanute ... Brahma jyeshtham - upasate."

Knowledge assumes the form of sacrifice. It also assumes the form of all other righteous acts. All the gods pursue and

adore knowledge, which itself is the Brahman. The Atman who is informed with and charged with Vijnana or knowledge is the Brahman Himself, it has been declared. But in order to attain to that state of realisation in which the Brahman is seen as Anandamaya, Bliss itself, not merely Vijnanamaya or knowledge, the act of meditation instinct with the knowledge of the Brahman as the object sought is necessary. So it is that in the Gayatri the term 'Dhi' compounded of all the three elements jnana, karma and dhyana or knowledge, action and communion has been employed to emphasise the importance of that spiritual meditation, which is an act of the God-charged soul, dwelling in bliss upon the Brahman. The prayer embodied in the Gayatri is – may Savitr inspire us and prompt us into this act of meditation.

Yah :

One interpretation of the term 'Yah' is expressed in "Yah – Savita – Suryah". The significance is – May He who is the Surya known as Savita inspire us! Alternatively, "Yah – iti – lingavyatyayah – yadbhargo – dhiyah – prachodayat – tat – dhyayema – iti – samanvayah" says Sayana. The burden of this interpretation is that we must meditate on that Bharga or that divine radiance of Aditya which inspires us into the act of meditation filled with knowledge. It is also suggested that the term 'Yah', undergoing a change of gender, indicates the Brahman direct – "Tasya – yat – Sabda nirdishtasya – atmanah – svarupa bhutam – Param Brahma – tatsavituh – ityadi padaih nirdisyate." The term 'yah' points to that Atman whose essential nature is the Para Brahman described by such terms as 'Savituh'. By this comment Sri Sankara has interpreted 'Yah' as signifying the Para Brahman Himself.

Nah :

'Nah' means 'to us'. The use of this term apparently suggests that the Brahman and the Jivas are different entities. Some hold that, although in reality there is no difference between the individual soul and the supreme soul, this mistaken sense

of difference is born in the individual owing to his ignorance springing from his physical nature. So, the commentators say, the prayer uttered in the Gayatri, differentiating between the individual and the supreme soul asks, "To us who are different from thee, grant thou that sense and will which is the means to *their* pursuit and attainment."

Prachodayat :

'Prachodayat' interpreted as 'Prerayet'. The significance of this term is – May Savitr inspire in us the right sense which prompts us to right action. In other words, the prayer here uttered is that Savita may grant us the power to realise the nature and virtue of his divine radiance by the performance of the right action inspired by the right knowledge. The important point to be noted about this prayer is that it is made perfectly clear that, without the grace of the Lord, it is impossible to attain the fruit of knowledge. The Lord says to Arjuna in the Gita, "Maya prasannena tava – Arjuna – idam rupam param darsitam atmayogat." "O Arjuna, it is I who, being pleased with thee revealed to this transcendental form (of mine) by my (power of) yoga." Thus the Lord Himself makes clear to Arjuna that it is by His grace that Arjuna was able to see the Lord's Cosmic form. The Katha Upanishad also says, "Nayamatma pravachanena labhyah na medhaya na bahunasrutena yam – eva – esha vrnute tena labhyah tasya esha atma vivrnute tanum svam." "This atman is not attainable by learning or the power of intellect. Neither is He to be attained by hearing the Srutis (or the Vedas) a great deal. He is attainable only by him whom this (Atman) Himself chooses. To such a person Atman fully reveals His form." Here again it becomes clear that it is only the Lord's chosen ones that receive His grace and it is only by his grace that they can gain Him. The mantra of the Rk Samhita "Agne naya...." also prays to the Lord for His own gracious guidance in order to attain Him. Even so, here in the Gayatri mantra, also, although the means to the attainment of Savita's Bharga are first stated to be the individual's own endeavour through

meditation inspired by knowledge, it is finally stressed that the most important means to the realisation of the Brahman is His own grace. It is He alone who can grant us the power and the will to seek Him and it is only if He wills that we can find Him through our endeavour. Without His will not a blade of grass can stir.

Winding up, it may now be stated that the ultimate good to be gained by man is – first the knowledge of that Divine principle which has transfigured itself into the universe and has manifested itself in an endless variety of forms and names; which, permeating the universe, is still beyond it; which is the cause of all opposites as well as the force harmonising all opposites; and which above all, is, in its original essential nature, the Light of all lights. And second, the ultimate ideal to be attained by man is to become Kratu-maya or sacrifice – charged through the spiritual communion in quest of that divine principle which is described in the Rks which dwells in the highest Heaven, which is too profound and mysterious to be grasped by the mere understanding; and, through such communion, it is the highest duty of man to acquire that very divinity which he is seeking to know and realise.

This is the greatest blessing to be sought for and attained. Such is the message of all the Vedic seers who have ‘seen’ the significance of all the great mantras like Gayatri through their own penance and self – realisation.





FOOT-NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. "In each age of the world, distinguished by high activity, there will be found at its culmination some profound Cosmological outlook, implicitly accepted, impressing its own type upon the current springs of action." A. N. WHITEHEAD, *Adventures of Ideas*.

2. Eternalism (Ideational), Temporalism (Sensate), and Mixed (Idealistic) types. P. A. SOROKIN, *Social & Cultural Dynamics*.

3. "The two worlds of value and action are bound together in the life of the Universe, so that the immortal factor of value enters into the active creation of the temporal fact."

A. N. WHITEHEAD, *Essays on Science & Philosophy*.

4. E. BOODIN, "*A Revolution in Metaphysics and Science*."

5. "... every theory rests ultimately on the priori, assumption that something was already in existence whether free neutrons, energy, quanta or simply the blank inscrutable "world stuff", the cosmic essence of which the multifarious Universe was subsequently wrought." EINSTEIN quoted by L. Barnett.

6. JOSIA ROYCE, "*The World and the Individual*".

7. The Reality of Nature must behave like the mind of a mathematician. JEANS, *The Mysterious Universe*.

8. "The sun, There, is all the stars, and every star again, is all the stars and the Sun," PLOTINUS.

9. "... or to admit that in these moods we catch something of the true relation of the world to ourselves — a relation not hinted at in a purely scientific analysis of its contents." EDDINGTON, *The Nature of the Physical World*.

10. "An addition to knowledge is won at the expense of an addition to ignorance. It is hard to empty the well of truth with a leaky bucket." HEISENBERG, interpreted by Eddington.

11. "Apart from it, human life is a flash of occasional enjoyments a bagatelle of transient experience." WHITEHEAD.

12. Science can only be valuable if it is actually a search for truth in which the end can be attained." E. W. BARNES. *Scientific Theory & Religion* (Gifford Lectures).

13. "Science, Religion and Reality." Ed. by EDDINGTON and DEAN INGE

14. JOSIA ROYCE: *The World and The Individual*. Vol. I. P. 141—222.

15. "The process of God-making in the factory of man's mind cannot be seen so clearly anywhere else as in the Rigveda." S. RADHAKRISHNAN, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I. P. 73.

16. Three strata of thought can be discerned in the religion of the hymns of Rigveda, which are (1) Naturalistic Polytheism, (2) Monotheism, (3) Monism. S. RADHAKRISHNAN, Vol. I. P. 72.

17. प्लवा ह्येते अदृढा यज्ञरूपा अष्टादशोक्तमवरं येषु कर्म ।

एतच्छ्रेयो येऽभिनन्दन्ति मूढा जरामृत्युं ते पुनरेवापि यन्ति ॥

मु उ. I—2.7.

यामिमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्यविपश्चितः ।

कामात्मानः स्वर्गपरा नान्यदस्तीति वादिनः ॥ B. G. II—41.44.

"The simple religion of the Vedic hymns was one of sacrifices. Men's relations with the Gods were mechanical; a question of give and take, profit and loss." S. RADHAKRISHNAN, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I P. 147.

18. ऋग्वेदं भगवोऽध्येमि यजुर्वेदं सामवेदं सोऽहम् ।

भगवो मन्त्रविदेवास्मि नात्मवित् ॥

छा. उ. III—2.3.

19. नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यः ।

कठ. उ. I—2.2.3.

20. ऋचो अक्षरे परमे व्योमन् ।

ऋ सं I—164.39.

21. Nirukta.

22. यस्तन्न वेद किमृचा करिष्यति । ऋ. सं. I - 164.39.

23. उत्तवः पश्यन्न ददर्श वाचं उत्तवः शृण्वन्न शृणोत्येनाम् ।

....

अधेन्वा चरति माययैष वाचं शुश्रुवां अफकामपुष्पाम् ॥

ऋ. सं. X - 17.4.5.

24. वेदान्तविज्ञानसुनिश्चितार्थाः

सु उ. III - 2.6.

25. ऋ. सं I - 164.39.

26. In the Madhu-Vidya prakarana of the Brhad Aranyaka Upanishad the RK Samhita verse "Rupam rupam pratirupo babhuva" (IV-47.18.) is cited to illustrate the monistic view of reality. But the RK Samhita verse "Rupam rupam maghava bobhaviti" (III 53.8.), addressed to Indra also eulogises the same reality.

At the end of the same Sukta, there is the prayer — "Balam Dhehi balada asi." (III-53.18.)

"O thou Indra, fill our bodies with strength. Fill our sons and grandsons, and fill our animals too with strength."

In the 47th Sukta of the 6th Mandala, verses 11 and 12 pray for wordly wealth —

"Hwayami patayah syama."

"May Indra, who is rich, grant us prosperity ! May he destroy our enemies ! May we thus become possessors of noble strength and (beneficial) wealth!

In another part of the same Sukta, containing the prayer mentioned above, we have the verse "Rupam rupam prati rupo bhabhuva", which is a monistic description of reality.

The 62nd Sukta of the 3rd Mandala contains the verse "Tat Savituh varenyam", which is again a monistic

description of reality, being a prayer addressed to the Cosmic Light, Param Jyoti. But in the same Sukta, we also come upon the verse "Somo asmabhyam anamiva ishaskarat." The prayer here uttered is that Soma might confer upon us, children and animals wholesome food.

Again, the Hiranygarbha Sukta, 121 of the 10th Mandala, is the Monistic description of reality as the Cosmic Creator. But at the end of it, we have the verse "Yat kamah, te patayo rayinam." "O Thou Prajapati we prefer thee our oblations, for we desire wealth and felicity. May our wishes be fulfilled !"

Thus there are a great many passages where the same Sukta contains, on the one hand, a monistic description of reality and verses addressed to Indra or other gods, eulogising them and praying for blessings. To regard the monistic parts of these passages as ancient and the remaining parts as later insertions would seem to be far from right. Nor would it seem proper to make such a division of these passages on linguistic considerations.

27. Only a few instances are given, though such instances could be multiplied.

- | | |
|--|---|
| a) कठ.उ. I-1.5. लोकादिमग्निं
बृ. उ. I-2.7. अग्निरर्कस्तस्येमे
लोका आत्मानः | } R. V. II-2.9.
त्मना शतिनं पुरुरूप इषणि |
| b) बृ. उ. I-2.3. स त्रेधात्मानं
व्यकुरुत | } R. V. III-26.7-8.
अग्निरस्मि जन्मना |
| c) बु. उ. I-2.5. तथा वाचा
सर्वमसृजत
तददिते दितित्वम् ॥ | } R. V. I-89.10. ।
अदितिर्द्यौः । |
| d) बृ. उ. I-5.16. इयं वै तन्मधु | } R. V. I-116-117. |
| e) बृ. उ. I-4.10. | } R. V. IV-26 |

॥ तदेतद्व्याभ्युक्तम् ॥

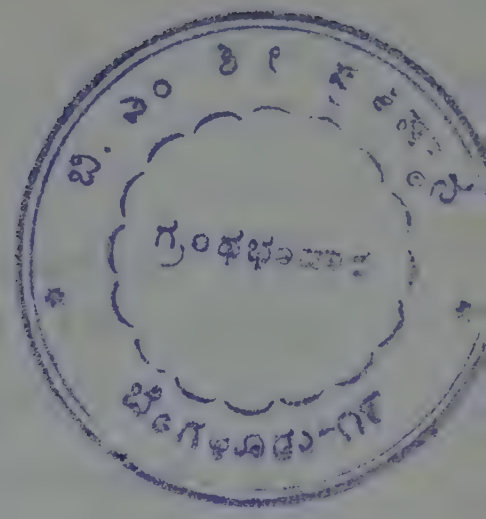
- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. छा उ. III-12.5. . . . | R.V. X - 90. | (एतावानस्य) |
| 2. बृ उ. IV-4.23. . . . | | एष नित्यः |
| 3. सु. उ. III-2.10. . . . | | क्रियावन्तः |
| 4. प्र उ. I-7. . . . | | विश्वरूपं
(विश्वतश्चक्षुः) |

Note by the author : Throughout this book, mantras of the RK Samhita have been cited to substantiate some line of argument in the body of the work. But there may be certain mantras herein used for purposes of illustration, which may not be found among the compilations available at present. The mass of Vedic texts is really almost endless. It would seem presumptuous to think that the mantras included among the available compilations are the lost word. In this connection, the view of Professor Maxmuller on this point is worth quoting. He says, "We have no right to suppose that we have even a hundredth part of the religious and popular poetry that existed during the Vedic age." *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, — P. 41.*

Chapter — I

- 1 आ नासत्या त्रिभिरेकादशैरिह देवेभिर्षातं । I—34.11.
- 2 श्रुष्टीवानो हि दाशुषे देवा अग्ने विचेनसः ।
तान् त्रयस्त्रिंशत्तमावह ॥ I - 45.2.
- 3 ये देवासो द्विष्येकादश स्थ पृथिव्यामध्येकादश स्थ ।
अप्सुक्षितो महिनैकादश स्थ ॥ I—139.11.
- 4 त्रीणि शता त्री सहस्राण्यग्निं त्रिंशच्च देवा नव चासपर्यन् । II—19.9.
- 5 पत्नीवतस्त्रिंशत् त्रींश्च देवाननुष्वधमा वड मादयस्व । III—6.9.

- 6 नमो महद्भ्यो नम अर्भकेभ्यो नमो युवभ्यो
.... नम आशिनेभ्यः । I—27.13.
- 7 ये स्थ जाता अदिते रद्ध्यस्परि ये पृथिव्यास्ते
.... । X—63.2
“Neither in the philosophical hymns nor in the mythology
are the Gods treated as existing from all eternity to
eternity. The Gods are born from Aditi, from the
waters and from the earth.” WALLIS, *Cosmology of the
Rg. Veda.*
- 8 माता देवानामदितेरनीकम् । II—13.9.
- 9 देवानां यः पितरमाविवासति श्रद्धामना हविषा
ब्रह्मणस्पतिम् । II—26.3.
- 10 या ओषधीः पूर्वा जाता देवेभ्यस्त्रियुगं पुरा । X—97.
- 11 अर्वाग्देवा अस्य विसर्जनेनाथा को वेद यत आ बभूव । X—129.6.
- 12 देवेभ्यो हि प्रथमं यज्ञियेभ्योऽमृतत्वं सुवसि भागमुत्तमं । IV—54.2.
- 13 त्वां देवासो अमृताय कं वपुः । IX—106.8.
- 14 तपसा देवा देवतामग्र आयन् । तै. ब्रा. III—12.3.1
- 15 “रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव” बृ. उ. II—5.19.
अहं मनुः बृ. उ. I—4.10.
- 16 This fact is clearly and definitely revealed in the dialogue
between Vidagdha Sakalya and YagnaValkya in the
Brhad Aranyaka Upanishad —
Q. O Thou Yagnavalkya, how many are the Gods ?
A. Three Hundred and Three and three thousand and
three.
Q. How many are the Gods ?
A. Thirty-Three.



Q. How many are the Gods ?

A. Three.

Q. How many are the Gods ?

A. Two.

Q. How many are the Gods ?

A. One and a half.

Q. How many are the Gods ?

A. One.

Q. Who is the One God.

A. He is Prana, the vital principle. He is the Brahman.
And is the Reality.

(Brhad Aranyaka —3.9.2.)

17 स होवाच महिमान एवैषामेते बृ. उ. III—9.2.

“He said that all these are but the diverse glories of one
and the same Reality dividing Itself into thirty three
forms.”

18 भवद् भूतस्य भव्यस्य जङ्गमस्थावरस्य च ।

अस्यैके सूर्यमेवैकं प्रभवं प्रलयं विदुः ॥ बृहद् देवता I—61.64.

19 असतश्च सतश्चैव योनिरेधा प्रजापतिः ।

यदक्षरं च वाच्यं च यथैतद्ब्रह्म शाश्वतम् ॥

20 कृत्वेषा हि त्रिदात्मानं एषु लोकेषु तिष्ठति ।

देवान्यथायथं सत्त्वान्निवेश्य स्वेषु रश्मिषु ॥

21 एतद्भूतेषु लोकेषु स्थिं त्रिधा ।

ऋषयो गीर्भिरर्चन्ति व्यञ्जितं नामाभिस्त्रोभिः ॥

....

तत्तत् स्थानविभागेन तत्र तत्रेह दृश्यते ।

.... I—61.74.

22 तेषामात्मैव तत्सर्वं यद्यद्भक्तिः प्रकीर्त्यते ।

तेजस्त्वेवायुधं प्राहुर्वाहनं चैव यस्य यत् ॥

23 Expression like विश्वमेकं ; तदेकं occurring in the RK Samhita III - 54.8. ; X—129.2., respectively describe the unity and harmony that underlie the diversity of the Universe.

24 देवस्त्वष्टा सविता विश्वरूपः । R.V. III—55.19.

25 प्रजापते न त्वदेतान्यन्यो विश्व जातानि परिता बभूव ।
R.V. X—121.10.

26 विश्वेदेते जनिमा सं त्रिविक्तो मही देवान् बिभ्रती न व्यथेते ।
एजद् ध्रुव पत्यते विश्वमेकं चरत् पतत्रि विषुणं वि जातम् ॥
R.V. III—54.8.

27 याहमेव ददृशे तादृगुच्यते सं छायाया दधिरे सिध्रयांस्वा ।
R.V. V—44.6.

28 तान्यस्यैतानि कर्मनामान्येव । B.U. I—4.7.

29 “ यजुरित्येष हीद सर्व युनक्ति ”
S.Br. X—5.2.20.

The Adhwaryus describe Him as *Yajuh*, because he coordinates and unifies the whole universe. The Samavedins have described Him as *Saman* since all things are contained in Him and have an equal state or states He is described in diverse ways according to His different forms and functions, according to the different attitudes with which he is sought and according to the knowledge and capacity of different seekers. S. Br. X—5.2.20.

30 “ Ya esho-antardityo hiranmayah purushah ” Sayana quotes this hymn from the Chandogya Upanishad and explains that in this mantra is eulogised the supreme principle called the Para Brahman who dwells within Aditya and who has been reputed as the golden being.

“ हंसः शुचिषत् ” R. V. IV-40.5 ; K. II-2.2.

31 इन्द्रं मित्रं I-164.46. of X-114.4-5; X-5.1-3, etc.

32. नैतावदेना परो अन्यदत्स्युक्षा स द्यावापृथिवी बिभर्ति । X-31.8.

33. The questions asked are — How many are the Agnis ? How many the Suryas ? How many are the Ushas gods ? In reply it is stated “ Eka eva Agnih babhuva sarvam”. (8-58-2)

“Agni is only one. He himself shines in many forms. The Surya, who illumines all worlds is also one. And the number of Ushas gods is also one. That original source from which all these spring is one principle and no more.”

34. The epithets “ tasya vamasya palitasya hotuh ” describe the nature of Prajapati (RK. Sam. 1-164.1). Sayana interprets the epithets mentioned above as follows :— Vamasya — “ Visvasya udgarituh svasatuh ”. “ He who made manifest and created the whole universe in the form of Brahmanda, the Brahman’s egg. Palitasya — (Svasrshta-jagatpalanasya), “ He who alone is able to protect the Universe created by himself.”

होतुः आदातुः (यद्यदेवासृजत Bri. Up. I-2-5.

35. Aditi —In the nighantu or glossary *Aditi* has been included among the names of (i) Prithvi, (ii) the names of Vak or Speech ; (iii) the names of Go or Cow ; and the names of Dyava-Prithvi, the Earth and Heaven.

(Nirukta 1-1, 1-11 and 3-30).

In the description of the aerial gods or the gods of the lower heavens, Aditi has been given a leading place (Nirukta, 11-12). The Nirukta interpretation of the term as ‘ Adina devamata ’ reveals that Aditi is the mother of the gods, There are also certain differences of opinion in describing the nature of this deity.

It is natural and appropriate to define the term ‘ Aditi ’ as ‘ Alanghya ’, (that which cannot be leapt across); or ‘ Anati Kramaniya ’ (that which cannot be crossed); or ‘ Akshaya ’ (that which does not wear out); or ‘ Pramanatita ’ (that which is beyond all measurement).

In other words, many scholars think that *Aditi* is a unique deity far greater than *Dyava prithvi*, which are bound by frontier, having an immeasurable extent and presenting the very image of infinity. It is in this form that this deity has been eulogised in the RK and other Sruti Hymns like 'Aditih dyauh' (RK. Sam. 1-89-10), eulogised Aditi who pervades the Universe. She is the source and origin of all varieties of beings like gods of the present, past and future. She is indeed the very soul of all.

36. **Panchajanah** — This term literally means five kinds of persons. Some believe that these five are the Gandharvas, the Pitrs or manes, the Gods, the Asuras and the Rakshasas. Upamanyu and some others think that, in addition to the four varnas, namely Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras, a fifth group known as Nishadas is included in 'Panchajanas'. The metaphysical school interpret 'Panchjanas' as Chakshus, the eye; Srotra, the ear; Manas, the mind; Vak or speech; and Prana, the life-force.

Ten kinds of lokapalas or guardians of the world's work as the cause of all affairs of the universe. They are subservient to the Prime cause and carry out its laws. Such is the account of the Chandogya — "Tasma u ha dasa santah". (Chandogya, 4-3-8). In such contexts, the first five referred to are to be understood as Agni, Surya, Vayu, Chandra and Udaka. And the second five should be taken as Prana, Vak, Chakshu, Srotra and Manas. In the RK. hymn "Uttanayam dasayuktah vahanti", the term 'dasayuktah' has been interpreted in the same manner as described above.

All creatures like the gods and men obey and execute the will and the regulations of the Cosmic principle and, under its command, they perform all the functions of the universe.

37. That the same principle, having willed to create the universe, assumes both male and female forms and manifests itself in the universe will be explained in detail later on.
cf. RV. X-5.7.
38. अहमेव वात इव प्र वाग्यारभमाणा भुवनानि विश्वा ।
परो दिवा पर एना पृथिव्यै तावती महिना सं बभूव ॥ X-124.8.
39. देवानां पूर्व्ये युगेऽसतः सदजायत । X-72.2. cf X-5.7.
40. नामरूपरहितत्वादसत्समानाद्ब्रह्मणः सकाशात् । Sayana Bhashya.
41. “ असदव्याकृतं ; सच्च व्याकृतं ” Sayana Bhashya X-5.7.
cf “ असदेवेदमग्र आसीत् ; तत्सदासीत् ” छा. उ. III-19.1.
42. यस्यानक्षा दुहिता जात्वास कस्तां विद्वां अभिमन्याते अन्धाम् ।
कतरो मेनि प्रति तं मुचाते य इं वहाते य ईं वा वरेयात् ॥ V-27.11.
43. I-164.1.
44. “ महो देवो मर्त्यान् आविवेश ”
IV-58.3. cf I-164.38 ; I-35.2. ; VIII-48.12 ; X-81.1. etc.
45. तदेतद्व्यक्षरं सत्यमिति स इत्येकमक्षरं तीत्येकमक्षरं यमित्येकमक्षरं
प्रथमोत्तमे अक्षरे सत्यं मध्यमोऽनृतं तदेतदनृतमुभयतः सत्येन परि-
गृहीतं सत्यभूयमेव भवति ॥ Br. U. V 5.1.
46. उग्रस्तुराषालभिभूत्योजा यथावशं तन्वं चक्र एषः ।
त्वष्टारमिन्द्रो जनुषाभिभूयासुष्या सोममपिबच्चमूषु ॥ III-48.4.
रूपं रूपं मधवा बोभवीति मायाः कृण्वानस्तन्वं परि स्वाम् ।
III-53.8. cf. VII-101.3 ; X-15.14 ; X-168.4.
47. The aim of the Madhuvaidya prakarana is to show that, since all things in the Universe are mutually beneficial, all these, springing from the same source, are not different from the source. On the basis of the RK. statement “Rupam rupam pratirupo babhuva”, the Brhad Aranyaka gives a detailed description of the Madhuvidya.
“Idam Brahma idam Kshatramayam atma ”
Br. Aranyaka 2-4-6.

The description of the Atman contained in such statements as the one quoted above is itself Brahmavidya. All the several acts springing from the Lord bear to one another the relation of the beneficial and benefited. This is explained thus ;

“Prithvi or the Earth is madhu or honey to all beings. All the beings are madhu to the Earth. That Purusha or Person (or Being) who is full of radiance, who is immortal who dwells as fate or providence on earth and as the Spirit within the body is Himself the entire Universe. This Atma is Himself the Para Brahman.”

Similarly, Ap or water, Agni or fire, Vayu or the wind, Aditya or the sun, all the quarters, the moon, lightning, thunder, the skies, dharma, satya or truth and the atman are all severally as well as collectively honey to all existences. And all existences, conversely, are madhu to them.

“Sa va ayam atma atmanah samarpitah ”

Br. Aranyaka 3-5-15.

This Atman is the Lord of all beings. As all the spokes of wheel are placed between the axel and the circumference even so are all creatures, all gods, all living beings and all individual souls contained in this supreme Atman. This truth is expressed in such hymns of the RK Samhita as

“Trinabhi chakram tasthuh” (1-164-2)

“Panchare chakra visva” (1-164-13)

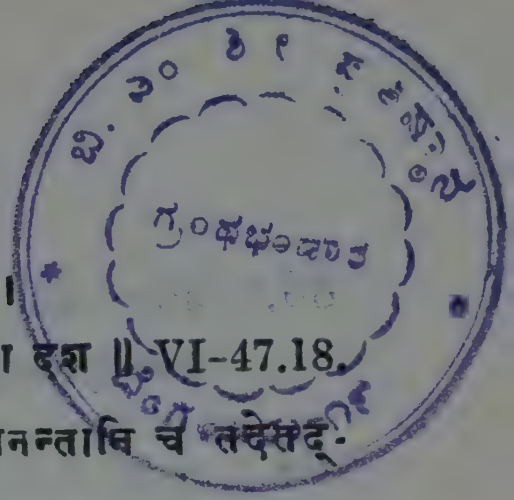
“Suryasya chakshuh visva” (1-164-14)

It is stated in the RK Samhita that Dadhyang atharvana taught this principle of Cosmic Unity to the Asvin gods. The Brhad Aranyaka has only expanded the idea on the basis of the RK Samhita texts.

48. RV I-116; I-116.

49. विश्वा रूपाणि प्रतिमुञ्चते कविः ।

V-81.2 ; VII-41.1-16.



50. रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव तदस्य रूपं प्रति चक्षणाय ।
इन्द्रो मायाभिः पुरुरूप ईयते युक्ता ह्यस्य हरयः शता दश ॥ VI-47.18.
“अयं वै हरयोऽयं वै हश च सहस्राणि बहूनि चानन्तावि च तदेतद्-
ब्रह्मपूर्वं अयमात्मा ब्रह्म ।”
51. आणि न रथ्यममृताधि तस्थुरिह ब्रवीतु य उ तच्चिकेतत् । I-35.6.
52. The way in which the original cause is described by means of the simile of the wheel has been adopted in all the Upanishads. For instance,
“Ara iva brahma cha ” (Prasna, 2-6)
“Ara iva yatha ” (Prasna, 6-6)
2-2-6, Mundaka and 1-4, Svetasvatara may be quoted.
53. अग्ने नेमिररान् इव देवांस्त्वं परिभूरसि । V-13.16.
54. द्वारशारं न हि तज्जराय वर्वर्ति चक्रं परि द्यामृतस्य । I-164.11.
सनेमि चक्रमजरं वि वावृत उत्तानायां दश युक्ता वहन्ति ।
I-164.14 cf. Bri. Up. II-3.1. etc.
55. ‘संवसन्तेऽस्मिन् भूतानि’ सा. भा.
Samvatsare, Parivatsare, Idvatsare etc. are its parts.
56. षड्भागां एको अचरन् बिभर्त्यृतं वर्षिष्ठमुप गाव आगुः ।
तिस्रो महीरुपरास्तस्थुरत्या गुहा द्वे निहिते दश्येका ॥ III-56.2.
57. तिस्रो मातृस्त्रीन् पितृन् बिभ्रदेक ऊर्ध्वस्तस्थौ नेमव ग्लापयन्ति ।
मन्त्रयन्ते दिवो अमुष्य पृष्ठे विश्वविदं वाचमविश्वमिन्दाम् ॥ I-164.10.
58. तस्य नाक्षस्तप्यते भूरिभारः सनादेव न शीर्यते सनाभिः ॥ I-164.13.
59. Br. Up. IV 4.16-17.
60. तिस्रो द्यावः सवितुर्द्वा उपस्थां एका यस्य भुवने विराषाद् ।
आणि न रथ्यममृताधि तस्थुरिह ब्रवीतु य उ तच्चिकेतत् ॥ I-35.6.
61. ध्रुवं ज्योतिर्निहितं दृश्ये कं मनो जविष्ठं पतयत्स्वन्तः ।
विश्वेदेवाः समनसः सकेता एकं कृतुमभि वियन्ति साष्ट ॥ VI-9.5.
62. समुद्रादूर्मिमधुमां उदारदुपांशुना सममृतत्वमानद् ।
घृतस्य नाम गुह्यं यदस्ति जिह्वा देवानाममृतस्य नाभिः IV-58.1.

63. उषसः पूर्वा अध यद् व्यूषुर्भहद् वि जज्ञे अक्षरं पदे गोः ।
व्रता देवानामुप नु प्रभूषन् महद्देवानामसुस्त्वमेकम् ॥ III-55 1.
64. न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकम् नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥
कठ. उ. V-15.
65. Sri Shankara explains how the Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad
expounds the Philosophy contained in the RK. X-121.5.
“ येन द्यौरग्रा पृथिवी च दृढहा येन स्वः स्तमितं यो अन्तरिक्षे रजसो
विमानः ॥ of Bri. Up. Bhashya III-8,9.
66. ऋचो अक्षरे परमे व्योमन् यस्मिन् देवा अधि विश्वे निषेदुः ।
यस्तन्न वेद् किमृचा करिष्यति य इत्तद्विदुस्त इमे समासते ॥ I-164.39.
67. महापुरुष इति यमवोचाम संवत्सर एव प्रध्वंसयन्नन्यानि भूतानि ।
स यश्चायमशरीरः प्रज्ञात्मा यश्चासावादित्य एकमेतदिति विद्यात् ।
तस्मात्पुरुषं पुरुषं प्रत्यादित्यो भवति । तदप्येतदृषिणोक्तं ।
“ चित्रं देवानां ॥ ” ऐ. आ. III-2.3.
- प्रत्यङ् देवानां विशः प्रत्यङ्गुदेषि मानुषान् ।
प्रत्यङ् विश्वं स्वर्दृशे ॥ X-50.5.
- तस्मात् सर्व एव मन्यन्ते मां प्रत्युद्गात् । तै. सं. VI-5.4.2.
68. I 115-1
69. यस्माहर्वाक्संवत्सरोऽहोभिः परिवर्तते ।
तद्देवा ज्योतिषां ज्योतिरायुर्होपासतेऽमृतम् ॥
70. वर्मा समन्ता त्रिवृतं व्यापतुस्तयोर्युष्टिं मातरिश्वा जगाम् । X-114.1.
यस्योरुषु त्रिषु विक्रमणेष्वधिक्षियन्ति भुवनानि विश्वा ॥ I-154.2.

It is declared in these Sruthis that all created beings, all existences live and move in (the compass of) the three infinitely spreading feet of Vishnu. There are differences of opinion about what these foot-steps are and what region each compasses.

Western scholars have interpreted this description as a figurative description of sun-rise, the ascent to the zenith and sun-set; that is to say, as the description of the three stages of the sun's diurnal journey. Max Muller, for instance, says, "This stepping of Vishnu is emblematic of the rising, the culminating and the setting of the sun."

Max Muller — S.B.E. Vol. XXXII p. 133.

From the statements of Nirukta it is learnt that even ancient scholars of India like Aurnavabha—(Ni. XII-19) have given this very interpretation. For instance, the author of Nirukta cites, "Samarohane Vishnupade gaya-sirasi iti Aurnavabhaha" (Nirukta, 12-19). Durgacharya's explanation of this statement is

Samarohane —Udayagiravudyan padamekam nidhatte
Vishnupade —Madhyandine antarikshe
gaya sirasi —astangirau.

The Niruktakara explains that the view expressed by Aurnavabha with regard to the Sruti statement "Tredha nidhadhe padam" is that sun-rise represents one step of Vishnu, a step placed on Udayachala, the hill of sun-rise that, at noon-day, the sun's ascent in the highest part of the sky represents Vishnu's second step that, finally sun-rise stands for the third step of Vishnu, placed on the hill of sun-set. Moreover,

"Vishnuh tridha padam Sakapunih" Ni. 12.19.

It is pointed out that Sakapuni's view in the matter is that the three steps of Vishnu represent the three stages of sun's journey across Prithvi, Antariksha and Dyuloka, the Earth, the Air (or the Sky) and the Heavens. Explaining this view, Durgacharya says, "Parthivognirbhutva prithivya yatkinchit asti tat vikramate — antarikshe vidyudatmana — divi suryatmana". In other words, Durgacharya believes that the import of Sakapuni's view is that Vishnu in the three forms of Agni, Vayu and Surya compasses and crosses all the three worlds.

Sakapuni's view is confirmed by Samhita statements like "Vishnumukha vai devah" (Taittiriya Samhita, 1-75-4) and "Sa Vishnuh tredha atmanam nyadhata" (Taittiriya Samhita, 2-4-123). It is also supported by Brahmana statements like "Yadveva Vishnuh kraman kramate" (Satapatha Brahmana, 1-9-3-9). This substance of all these descriptions is that Vishnu in the three forms, Agni, Vayu and Surya places three steps which encompass the three worlds Prithvi, Antariksha and Dyuloka, the Earth, the Sky and Heavens.

71. अग्निरस्मि जन्मता जातवेदा घृतं मे चक्षुरमृतं मा आसन् ।
अर्कस्त्रिधातू रजसो विमानोऽजस्रो वर्मो हविरस्मि नाम ॥ III-26.7.
72. त्रिधा हितं पणिभिर्गुह्यमानं गवि देवासो घृतमन्वविन्दन् ।
इन्द्र एकं सूर्य एकं जजान वेनादेकं स्वधया निष्टतक्षुः ॥ IV-58.4.
73. त्रयः केशिन ऋतुथा विचक्षते संवत्सरे वपत एक एषाम् ।
विश्वमेको अभि चष्टे शचीभिर्ध्राजिरेकस्य ददृशे न रूपम् ॥ I-164.44.
74. वसवी यद्विवसते सर्वे । अग्निर्वसुभिर्वासव इति समाख्या । तस्मात्
पृथिवीस्थानाः । इन्द्रो वसुभिर्वासव इति समाख्या । तस्मा-
न्मध्यस्थानाः । वसव आदित्यरश्मयो विवासनात् । तस्माद्
द्युःस्थानाः ॥ Nirukta XII-41.

The term *Vasu* is used as the designation inasmuch as the Supreme Being encompasses and pervades all things. Agni is called *Vasava* because he spreads over all prithvi or the Earth. Vayu is called *Vasave* because he pervades all the skies (or all the air). Aditya is also called *Vasava* because he pervades Dyuloka or the Heavens. Thus the designation is perfectly appropriate because the Supreme pervades and permeates all the three worlds, the Earth, the Air (or the Skies) and the Heavens.

75. cf. III 56.2.
76. इदं श्रेष्ठं ज्योतिषां ज्योतिरागाच्चित्रः प्रकेतो अजनिष्ट विश्वा ।
यथा प्रसूता सवितुः सवयन् एवा रात्र्युषसे योनिमारैक् ॥ I-113.1.

77. त्रिरुत्तमा दूणशा रोचनानि त्रयो राजन्त्यसुरस्य वीराः ।
ऋतवान इषिरा इळभासस्त्रिरा दिवो विदथे सन्तु देवाः ॥ III-56.8.
78. आदित्यः कस्मादादत्ते रसानादत्ते भासं ।
ज्योतिषामादीप्तो भसेति वा ॥ Nirukta II-13.
79. रसान् रश्मिभिरादाय वायुनायं गतः सह ।
वर्षत्येष च यल्लोके तेनेन्द्र इति स स्मृतः ॥ Brihaddevata I-68.
80. दिवस्परि प्रथमं जज्ञे अग्निरस्मद्द्वितीयं परि जातवेदाः ।
तृतीयमप्सु नृमणा अजस्रमिन्धान एनं जरते स्वाधीः ॥ X-45.1-4.
The term Matarisvan denotes all the three forms of Agni.
81. मूर्धा भुवो भवति नक्तमाग्निस्ततः सूर्यो जायते प्रातरुद्यन् ।
मायामू तु यज्ञियानामेतामपो यत्सूर्णिश्चरति प्रजानन् ॥ X-88.6.
82. “ विश्वाप्सुं विश्वदेव्यम् । ” I-148.1.
83. “ त्वमग्ने द्युभिः
त्वमग्ने इन्द्रः
त्वमग्ने राजा वरुणः
..... ॥ ” II-1.1-14.
84. “ अमी ये सप्त रश्मयस्तत्रा मे नाभिरातता ।
त्रितस्तद्वेदाप्यः स जामित्वाय ॥ ”
I-105.9. cf. X-46.3-6 etc.
85. असि यमो अस्यादित्वो अर्वन्नसि त्रितो गुह्येन व्रतेन ।
असि सोमेन समया विपृक्त आहुस्ते त्रीणि दिवि बन्धनानि ॥ I-163.3.
86. III-5.4.
87. नहि वो अस्त्यर्भको देवासो न कुमारकः ।
विश्वे सतो महान्त इत् ॥ VIII-30,1.
88. इहेह जाता समवावशीतामरेपसा तन्मा नाममिः स्वैः ।
जिष्णुर्वामन्यः सुमुखस्य सूरिर्दिवो अन्यः सुभगः पुत्र ऊहे ॥ I-181.4.
89. “ तमो भागो हि मध्यमो, ज्योतिर्भाग आदित्यः ” Nirukta XII-1.
The Asvins —If we gather together the views of traditional
vedic scholars of India and those of modern Indian and

Western scholars about the Asvin gods, we see the following views :—

1. Yaska – The Twilight before Dawn; half dark and half light.
2. Aurnavabha – Light rays.
3. Oldenberg – Morning or Evening Star.
4. Macdonell – Twilight or Morning Stars.
5. Bloomfield – Morning or Evening Stars.
6. Hopkins – Transition from darkness to light.
7. Bergaigne – Fire of Heaven and the Altar.
8. Historians – Two pious kings.
9. E. N. Ghosh – Two stars of Aswini (i. e., of the Aswini constellation.
10. Weber – Twin constellation of Gemini.
11. Shama Shastry – The Sun and the Moon.
12. Max Muller – Personification of morning and evening.

A few statements of the RK Samhita give us some information about these gods. For instance, “Twashta duhitre mithuna saranyah”.

(RK Samhita, 10-17-1 & 2)

Twashta willed, at the time of his daughter's wedding, that the entire world might gather together. This daughter, who was the wife of Vivaswan and who later became Yama's mother, disappeared at the very moment of her wedding. In other words, this immortal bride was made invisible to mortal eyes and was concealed from their view. Then being made 'Savarna', they gave her in marriage to Vivaswan.

The gist of the RKs cited above is that the goddess whose account is given above and who is well known by the name of Saranyu gave birth to two sons, the Asvin gods.

In another passage it is stated – “Yamaschidatra budhna eta” (RK Samhita, 3-39-3.)

The mother of the Twins (that is to say, the mother of Asvin gods) gave birth to the Twins. These Twins, becoming embodied, destroyed darkness. Quoting this passage, Professor Max Muller gives his opinion on this point thus: "We might have guessed from the text itself, even without the help of the commentator, that 'The mother of Twins' here spoken of is dawn, but it may be stated that the comentator, too, adopts this view."

(Science of Language, Max Muller, Vol. II, p. 530)

Another mantra states that these two gods are special luminaries. "Ati drava sadhuna patha,"

(RK Samhita, 10-14-10).

Max Muller's view about the two gods mentioned in this mantra is — "These two gods represent Time, in double aspect as morning and evening. Representing Time in all forms of its double aspect as morning and evening, day and night, bright and dark fortnights, bright and dark halves of the year, the two gods probably are identical with the two Asvins."

(Science of Language, Max Muller, Vol. II)

Thus these two gods that are said to follow Yama may be taken as the divisions of Time such as day and night, morning and evening, bright and dark fortnights or the northern and southern equinoxes. These are the divisions in natural phenomena of which the Asvins seem to be symbols.

Thus it is clear that, whatever god or goddess may be considered, it is not possible to come to a precise conclusion about its nature. In the present context, only one instance is discussed in detail. In the next section, the way in which the nature of Pushan and Ushas etc., is described will be discussed.

90. In part II will be discussed the nature and function of all the Vedic deities (Cf. RK Samhita, Part II, Cosmic Light and Its Several Aspects).

91. In the section on 'Purushartha Sadhana' of the present work, it will be shown that it is the Para Brahman Himself who is called Savitr.
92. विश्वे देवाः समनसः सकेता एकं क्रतुमभि वि यन्ति साधु । VI-9.5.
भजन्त विश्वे देवत्वं नाम क्रतुं सपन्तो अमृतमेवैः ॥ I-68.2.

Chapter – II

1. The term 'Rta' has, depending upon the context, various meanings like water, sacrifice, Aditya or truth. For purposes of present discussion only those passages of the RK Samhita are cited for illustration where the term means Cosmic law or the Moral Order governing the Universe.
2. क्रतस्य दृळहा धरुणानि सन्ति पुरुणि चन्द्रा वपुषे वपूंषि ।
क्रतेन दीर्धमिषणन्त पृक्ष क्रतेन गाव क्रतमा विवेशुः ॥
....
क्रताय पृथ्वी बहुले गभीरे क्रताय धेनू परमे दुहाते ॥ IV-23.9-10.
3. अयं रोचयदरुचो रुचानोऽयं वासयद् व्यृतेन पूर्वीः ।
अयमीयत क्रतयुग्मिभरश्चैः खर्विदा नाभिना चर्षणिप्राः ॥ VI-39.4.
4. उदुत्यच्चक्षुर्महि मित्रयोरां एति प्रियं वरुणयोरदब्धम् ।
क्रतस्य शुचि दर्शतमनीकं रुक्मो न दिव उदिता व्यद्यौतू ॥ VI-51.1.
5. इदमु त्वन्महि महामनीकं यदुस्त्रिया सचत पूर्व्यं गौः ।
क्रतस्य पदे अधि दीद्यानं गुहा रघुष्यद् रघुयद् विवेद ॥ IV-5.9.
cf. I-164.11 ; I-136.2 etc.
6. द्युतद्यामानं बृहतीमृतेन क्रतावरीमरुणप्सुं विभातीम् ।
देवीमुषसं स्वरावहन्तीं प्रति विप्रासो मतिभिर्जरन्ते ॥ V-80.1.
cf. I-123.9.

7. ऋतेन देवीरमृता अमृक्ता अर्णोभिरापो मधुमग्निभरग्ने ।
वाजी न सर्गेणु प्रस्तुभातः प्र सदमिन् स्तवितवे दधन्युः ॥ IV-80.1.
8. ऋतादनृतमाददाथे । I-139.2.
9. III-10.2; V-63.1; VI-51.3; VII-66.13. etc.
10. III-58.8; V-61.14. etc.
11. VIII-83 3. (ऋतस्य रथ्याः)
12. तिस्रो भूमीर्धारयन् त्रीरुतयून् त्रीणि व्रता विदधे अन्तरेषाम् ।
ऋतेनादित्या महि वो महित्वं तदर्थमन्वरुण मित्र चारु ॥ II-27.8.
ऋतेनादित्या बलिनः X-85.1.
13. धर्मणा मित्रावरुणा विपश्चिता व्रता रक्षेथे असुरस्य मायया ।
ऋतेन विश्वं भुवनं विराजथः सूर्यमाधत्तो दिवि चित्र्यं रथम् ॥ V-63.7.
14. स जायमानः परमे व्योमनि व्रतान्यग्निर्व्रतपा अरक्षत ।
व्यन्तरिक्षममिमीत सुकतुर्वैश्वानरो महिना वाकमस्पृशत् ॥ VI-8.2.
15. त्वमग्ने व्रतपा असि देव आ मर्त्येषु । VIII-11.1.
16. यस्य व्रते पृथिवी ननमीति यस्य व्रते शफवज्जर्भुरीति ।
यस्य व्रत ओषधीर्विश्वरूपाः स नः पर्जन्य महि शर्म यच्छ ॥ V-83.5.
17. Who are the Adityas ? And how many are they ? The RK Samhita statements about these two questions differ in different places. For instance, the verse says, "Srnotu Mitro Aryama Bhago nastuvijato Varuno Daksha Amsah". (II 27.1.)

Mitra, Varuna, Bhaga, Aryama, Daksha, Amsa —These six named Aditi's sons, the Adityas, and then they are eulogised.

Another verse says, "Deva Aditya ye Sapta" (9-II4-3). Here the Adityas, sons of Aditi are said to be seven, but they are not named.

But elsewhere we have, "Ashtau putraso . . . martandam abharat". (X-72.8-9).

“Those gods ” says the verse, “ Who sprang from Aditi’s body are eight. Accompanied by seven of them, Aditi approached the gods. She sent-up Surya to the skies and established him there. Together with the same seven sons she went back to the past (or bygone) age. She established the eight sons, Aditya in the highest Heaven in order that creatures might be created and dissolved. The Taittiriya Aranyaka clearly mentions the names of all these eight sons of Aditi —“ Ashtau putraso Vivaswamschetyete ”. (Taittiriya Aranyaka, 1-13-3) Mitra, Varuna, Dhata, Aryama, Amsa, Bhaga, Indra and Vivaswan are the eight Adityas.

Taittiriya Brahmana statements like “ Aditih Putrakama ” relate the manner in which eight sons were born from A t. (T. Br. I-1.9.1-3).

In the RK Samhita passage “ Tatsu nah Savita Bhagovaruno Mitro Aryama ”. Savita has also been included among Bhaga and others. (VIII-18.3.)

The Brhad devata mentions the Adityas as twelve. They are — Bhaga, Aryama, Amsa, Mitra, Varuna, Dhata, Vidhata, Vivaswan, Twashta, Pushan, Indra and Vishnu (Brhad devata, 5-146, 147). It is these twelve Adityas who are well known in the Epics.

18. अमी य ऋक्षा निहितास उच्चा नक्तं ददृश्रे कुइ सिद्धिवेयुः ।
अदब्धानि वरुणस्य व्रतानि विशाकशच्चन्द्रमा नक्तमेति ॥ I-24.10.
19. यासां राजा वरुणो यति मध्ये सत्यानृते अवपश्यञ्जनानाम् ॥ VII-49.3.
20. न वां देवा अमृता आ मिनन्ति व्रतानि मित्रावरुणा ध्रुवाणि । V-69.4.
21. X-12.5.
22. मधु वाता क्रतायते मधु क्षरन्ति सिन्धवः । I-90.6. etc.
23. क्रतेन राजन्ननृतं विविञ्चन् मम राष्ट्रस्याधिपत्यमेहि । X-124.6.
24. ऋतं यो अग्ने अनृतेन हन्ति ।
तमर्चिषा स्फूर्जयन् । X-87.11.

25. इमे चेतारो अनृतस्य भूरोर्भिन्नो अर्यमा वरुणो हि सन्ति । VII 60.5.
26. आ सूर्यो बृहतस्त्रिष्टदजान् ऋजु मर्तेषु वृजिना च पश्यन् । IV 1.17.
 ऋजु मर्तेषु वृजिना च पश्यन्नभि चष्टे सूर्यो अर्य एवान् । VI 51.2.
27. अग्ने नय सुपथा राये अस्मान् । I 189.1.
 cf. X 133.6. etc.
28. ऋतस्य धीतिर्वृजिनानि हन्ति । IV 23.8.
29. स्थातुश्च सत्यं जगतश्च धर्मणि पुत्रस्य पाथः पदमद्वयाविनः । I 159.3.
30. समानमेतदुदकमुच्चैत्यव चाहभिः ।
 भूमिं पर्जन्या जिन्वन्ति दिवं जिन्वन्त्यग्नयः ॥ I 164.51.
31. cf. Bhagavadgita III 14. etc.
32. पर्जन्यो वाव गौतमाग्निस्तस्य वायुरेव समिदभ्रं
 धूमो विद्युदार्चिरशनिरङ्गारा ह्लादनयो विस्पुलिङ्गाः ।
 तस्मिन्नेतस्मिन्नग्नौ देवाः सोमं राजानं जुह्वति
 तस्या आहुतेर्वर्षं सम्भवति ॥ छा. उ. V 5.1.
33. पृथिवी पूर्वरूपं द्यौरुत्तररूपं वृष्टिः सन्धिः पर्जन्यः सन्धाता ।
 ऐ. आ. III 1.2.
34. R. V. VII 101.4-6.
35. मायां वा मित्रवरुणा दिवि श्रिता सूर्यो ज्योतिश्चरति चित्रमायुधम् ।
 तमभ्रेण वृष्ट्वा गूह्यो दिवि पर्जन्य द्रप्सा मधुमन्त ईरते । V 63.4.
36. I 159.1.
37. I 43.9; I 84.4; III 55.14.
38. दिवक्षसो अग्निजिह्वा ऋतावृध ऋतस्य योनिं विमृशन्त आसते ।
 द्यां स्कभित्वयप आ चक्रुरोजसा यज्ञं जनिस्वी तन्वी३ नि मामृजुः ॥
 X 65.7.
39. अयं होता प्रथमः VI 9.4.
40. यज्ञेन यज्ञमयजन्त देवास्तानि धर्माणि प्रथमान्यासन् ।
 ते ह नाकं महिमानः सचन्ते यत्र पूर्वे साध्याः सन्ति देवाः ॥
 I 164.50; X 90.16.

41. सर्वेषां वा एष भूतानां सर्वेषां देवानामात्मा । Tait. Brahmana.
42. ऋ. सं. VI 9; X 130. etc.
43. Taittiriya Samhita explains the idea of R.V. I-164.33-35 in this way :
कल्पन्तेऽस्मा इमे लोका ऊर्जं प्रजासु दधाति अशिथिलं भावाय ।
T. S. VII-2.4.2.
44. जायते स यज्जायते तस्माद्यज्ञः — श. ब्रा. III-9.4.2.3.
45. I-164.35.
46. शिवा नः सख्या सन्तु भ्रात्राग्ने देवेषु युष्मे ।
सा नो नाभिः सदने सस्मिन्नूधन् ॥
47. श. ब्रा. X-5.4.1-14.
48. „
49. X-121.2.
50. B. G. III-12; 16.
51. त्वमिन्द्राभिभूरसि सूर्यमरोचयः ।
विश्वकर्मा विश्वदेवो महानसि ॥ VIII-98.2.
52. विभ्राजञ्ज्योतिषा स्वरगच्छो रोचनं दिवः ।
येनेमा विश्वा भुवनान्याभृता विश्वकर्माणा विश्वदेव्यावता ॥ X-170.4.
53. य इमा विश्वा भुवनानि जुह्वदृणिर्होता न्यसीदत्पिता नः ।
स आशिषा द्रविणमिच्छमानः प्रथमच्छदवरानाविवेश ॥ X-81.1.
cf. Nirukta X-26.
54. स यद्यदेवासृजत तत्तदस्तुमध्रियत सर्वं वा अत्तीति तददितेरदिदितित्वम् ।
बृ उ. I-2.5.
55. III 48.4; X 15.14. etc.
56. X 71.
57. X 125.
58. I 164.35.



59. यावद्ब्रह्म विष्टितं तावती वाक् ।
यत्र ह क च ब्रह्म तद्वाग्यत्र वाक् तद्वा ब्रह्म ॥
60. ब्रह्म वाग्ब्रह्म सत्यं च ब्रह्म सर्वमिदं जगत् ।
पातारं ब्रह्मगस्तेन शौनहोत्रः स्तुवञ्जगौ ॥ बृ. दे. II 40.
61. पार्थिवी मध्यमा दिव्या वागपि त्रिविधा तु या ।
तस्याः सूक्तानि नामानि यथास्थानं निबोधत ॥ बृ. दे. II 72-80.
62. ऋ. सं. VIII-100.10 : 11.
“वाचं सर्वगतां देवीं स्तौति यद्वागिति ब्यूचे ।” बृ. दे. VI 121.
- 63.-64. ऋ. सं. X 125.
65. श. ब्रा. X-5.1-5.
66. cf. Sayana Bhashya on I-164.16.
67. स हैतावानास यथा स्त्रीपुमांसौ समरिष्वक्तौ स इममेवात्मानं द्वेधापातयत्
बृ. उ. I 4.1-3.
68. मिथुनमुत्पादयते रयिं च प्राणं चेत्येतौ । प्रश्न उ. I 4.
69. त्वं स्त्री त्वं पुमानसि कुनार उत वा कुमारी ।
त्वं जीर्णो दन्तेन वञ्चसि त्वं जातो भवसि विश्वतोमुखः ॥ श्वे. उ. IV 3.
70. महो अर्णः सरस्वती प्रचेतयति केतुना ।
धियो विश्वा विराजति ॥ I 3.12.
71. पिता यत् स्वां दुहितरमधिष्कन् क्षमया रेतः सञ्जग्मानो नि विञ्चत् ।
स्वाध्योऽजनयन् ब्रह्म देवा वास्तोष्पतिं व्रतपां निरतक्षन् ॥ X 61.7.
72. X-177.2.

Sayana gives two different interpretations to this statement, one relating it to Aditya and the other to the Supreme Soul. According to the first, Aditya carries (conceives) the principle of speech in his consciousness. As has been related in the Taittiriya Brahmana, “In the morning He moves in Antariksha or the skies along with Vak or speech as manifested in the RKs. At noon, He becomes established in Vak assuming the form of Yajus. And at

sunset, He is eulogised by Vak taking the form of the Saman." Thus, at all times, He has an inseparable relation with Vak, manifesting herself as Trayi. The Gandharva inspires this Vak. The discerning Rshis or seers guard this goddess of speech at the place of sacrifice.

According to the second, 'Patanga', the Supreme Soul' conceived in His mind, prior to cosmic creation, the Veda conveying the manner of meaning. Hiranyagarbha, who dwells within Brahmanda (the Egg-shaped Universe) was the first to utter this speech called the Veda. The Gods' gifted with transcendental vision, guard this speech in the place of the Brahman who is the soul of Truth. Such is the account given of the state of the Lord's will before creation and its later transformation and differentiation as creation (i. e., of the Universe).

73. यज्ञेन वाचः पदवीयमायन् । X 71.3.
74. cf. ऋ सं. I-164.26-28.
75. एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः ।
अद्यायुरिन्द्रियारामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति ॥ BS. III 16.
76. IV 9.
-

Chapter – III

1. The four-fold ends of human life, namely, धर्म, अर्थ, काम and मोक्ष are comprehended here.
2. देवानां भद्रा सुमतिर्ऋजूयतां देवानां रातिरभि नो निवर्तताम् ।
देवानां सख्यमुप सेदिमा वयं देवा न आयुः प्र तिरन्तु जीवसे ॥ I 89.2.
3. आ नो देवः सविता सविधद्वय ऋजूयते यजमानाय सुन्वते । X 100.3.
4. यो मित्राय वरुणाय विधञ्जनोऽनर्वाणं नं परि पातो अंहसः ॥ I 136.5.
5. मधु वाता ऋतायते मधु क्षरन्ति सिन्धवः । I 90.6.

6. त्री रोचना दिव्या धारवन्त हिरण्यया शुचयो धारपूताः ।
अस्वप्नजो अनिमिषा अदब्धा उरुशंसा ऋतवे मर्त्याय ॥ II 27.9.
7. इन्द्राविष्णू तत् पनयाय्यं वां सोमस्य मद उरु चक्रमाथे ।
..... जीवसे नो रजांसि ॥ VI 69.5.
8. य आदत्या परिपन्थीव शूरोऽयज्वनो विभजन्नेति वेदाः । I 103.6.
9. जघन्वानिन्द्र मित्रेरुञ्चोदप्रवृद्धो हरिवो अदाशून् । I 174.6.
10. X 117.
11. VII 86.7.
12. महो अग्नेः समिधानस्य शर्मण्यनागा मित्रे वरुणे स्वस्तये । X 86.12.
अनागास्त्वेन हरिकेश सूर्याह्वाह्वा नो वस्यसावस्यसोदि हि । X 37.9.
13. येन सूर्य ज्योतिषा बाधसे तमो जगच्च विश्वमुदियर्षि भानुना ।
तेनास्मद्विश्वामनिरामनाहुतिमपामीवामप दुष्वप्न्यँ सुव ॥ X 37.4.
14. त्रातारो देवा अधि वोचता नो मा नो निद्रा ईशत मो त जल्पिः ।
VIII 48.12.
15. अस्वप्नजस्तरणयस्सुशेवा अतंद्रासोऽवृका अश्रमिष्ठाः । IV 4.12.
16. इदाहः पीतिमुता वो मदं धुर्न ऋतेऽश्रान्तस्य सख्याय देवाः ।
17. इदं नम ऋषिभ्यः पूर्वजेभ्यः पूर्वभ्यः पथिकृद्भ्यः ॥ X 14.15.
18. ऋतं शंसन्त ऋजु दीध्याना दिवसुत्रासो असुरस्य वीराः ।
विप्रं पदमङ्गिरसो दधाना यज्ञस्य धाम प्रथमं मनन्त ॥ X 67.2.
19. न मा मिमेथ न जिहीळ एषा शिवा सखिभ्य उत मह्यमासीत् ।
अक्षस्याहमेकपरस्य हेतोरनुव्रतामप जायामरोधम् ॥ X 34.2.
20. द्वेष्टि श्वश्रूरप जाया रुणद्धि न नाथितो विन्दते मर्डितारम् ।
अश्वस्येव जरतो नस्यस्य नाहं विन्दामि कितवस्य भोगम् ॥
.....
.....
जाया तप्यते कितवस्य हीना माता पुत्रस्य चरतः क्व स्वित् । X 34.3-10.
21. अक्षैर्मा दीव्यः कृषिमित् कृषस्व वित्ते रमस्व बहु मन्यमानः ।
तत्र गावः कितव तत्र जाया तस्मे वि चष्टे सवितायमर्यः ॥ X 34.12;13.

22. वात आवातु भेषजं शम्भु मयोभु नो हृदे ।
प्र ण आयूंषि तारिषत् ॥ X 186.1.
23. अश्मन्वती रीयते संरभध्वमुत्तिष्ठत प्र तरता सखायः ।
अत्रा जहाम ये असन्नशेवाः शिवान्ययमुत्तरेमाभि वाजान् ॥ X 53.8.
24. X 36.10.
25. X 103.10.
26. एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः ।
अधायुरिन्द्रयारामो मोघ पार्थ स जीवति ॥ III 16.
27. उतो रयिः पृणतो नोप दस्यत्युतापृणन् मर्डितारं न विन्दते । X 117.
28. मोघमन्नं विन्दते अप्रलेताः सत्यं ब्रवीमि वध इत्स तस्य ।
नार्यमणं पुष्यति नो सखायं केवलाघो भवति केवलादी ॥ X 117.6.
cf. B. G. III 12-13.
29. समञ्जन्तु विश्वे देवाः समापो हृदयानि नौ ।
सं मातरिश्वा सं धाता समु देष्टी दधातु नौ ॥ X 85.47.
30. जायेदस्तं मधवन्त्सेदु योनिस्तदित्वा युक्ता हरयो वहन्तु ॥ III 53.4.
31. सुमङ्गलीरियं वधूरिमां समेत पश्यत ।
सौभाग्यमस्यै दत्त्वयाथास्तं वि परेतन ॥ X 85.33.
32. गृहान् गच्छ गृहपत्नी यथासौ वशिनी त्वं विदथमा वदासि । X 85.26.
गृभ्णामि ते सौभगत्वाय हस्तं मया पत्या जरदष्टिर्यथासः ॥ X 85.36.
33. This is not the 'Do ut des' policy as interpreted by the
Western scholars.
34. या दम्पती समनसा सुनुत आ च धावतः ।
देवासो नित्ययाशिरा ॥
....
पुत्रिणा ता कुमारिणा विश्वमायुर्व्यश्नुतः ।
उभा हिरण्यपेशसः ॥ VIII 31.5-9.
35. सोमो वारं कर्मण्यं ददाति ।
सादन्यं विदथ्यं सभेयं पितृश्रवणं यो ददाशदस्मै । I 91.20,
यतो वीरः कर्मण्यः सुदक्षो युक्रग्रावा जायते देवकामः । III 4.9.

36. महि ज्योतिर्बिभ्रतं त्वा विचक्षण भास्वन्तं चक्षुषे चक्षुषे मयः
 आरोहन्तं बृहतः पाजसस्परि वयं जीवाः प्रति पश्येम सूर्य । X 37.8.
 ज्योक् पश्येम सूर्यमुच्चरन्तमनुमते मृळया नः स्वस्ति । X 59.6.
37. यस्मिन् वृक्षे मध्वदः सुपर्णा निविशन्ते सुवते चाधि विश्वे ।
 तस्येदाहुः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वग्रे तन्नोन्नशद्यः पितरं न वेद ॥ I 164.22.
38. Passages like यत्र ज्योतिर्जस्रं ; } IX 113.6-11.
 यत्र कामा निकामाश्च }
 describe the nature of bliss.
39. य ई चकार न सो अस्य वेद य ई ददर्श हिरुगिन्नु तस्मात् ।
 स मातुर्योना परिवीतो अन्तर्बहु प्रजा निऋतिमाविवेश ॥ I 164.32.
 cf. हिरण्यमेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम् (ईश)
40. महत्तन्नाम गुह्यं पुरुस्पृग्येन भूतं जनयो येन भव्यम् ।
 प्रत्नं जातं ज्योतिर्यदस्य प्रियं प्रियाः समविशन्त पञ्च ॥ X 55.2.
41. दूरे तन्नाम गुह्यं पराचैः । X 55.1.
42. न विजानामि यदिवेदमस्मि निण्यः संनद्धो मनसा चरामि ।
 यदा मागन् प्रथमजा क्रतस्यादिद्वाचो अश्नुवे भागमस्याः । I 164.37.
43. Nirukta VII 3.
44. को ददर्श प्रथमं जायमानमस्थन्वन्तं यदनस्था बिभर्ति ।
 भूम्या असुरसृगात्मा कस्वित्को विद्वांसमुपगात्प्रष्टुमेतत् ॥
 पाकः पृच्छामि मनसा विजानन्देवानामेना निहिता पदानि ।
 वत्से बाष्कयेऽधि सप्त तन्तून्विततिरे कवय ओतवा उ ।
 अचिकित्वाञ्चिकितुषश्चिदत्र कवीन् पृच्छामि विज्ञाने न विद्वान् ॥
 I 164.4-6.
45. न तं विदाथ य इमा जजानान्यद्युष्माकमन्तरं बभूव ।
 नीहारेण प्रावृता जलप्या चासुतृप उक्थशासश्चरन्ति ॥ X 82.7.
46. अक्षण्वन्तः कर्णवन्तः सखायो मनोजवेष्वसमा बभूवुः ।
 आदधनास उपकक्षा स उ त्वे हृदा इव स्नात्वा उ त्वे ददृशे ॥ X 71.7.
47. दर्शनेन श्रवणेन मत्या विज्ञानेनेदं सर्वं विदितम् ।
48. Some commentators are of the view that 'Indra' is celebra-
 ted by that name since he has the unique ability to know

the Para Brahman. The Kenopanishad has a story to show that Indra alone among the gods has the power of knowing the Supreme Spirit. This is how the story runs :

The Para Brahman gained victory for the gods. But the gods felt proud of themselves, fancying themselves the cause of the victory. The Para Brahman pricked the bubble of their presumptuous self-esteem and, by making them realise their short-comings, dispelled their overweening pride.

Assuming an immaterial form the Para Brahman became manifest as a Yaksha before the gods. Then neither Agni who is famous by his title of Jatavedas, nor Vayu who is well-known by his title of Matarisvan, nor any of the rest of the gods, was able to know this mysterious personage in the strange form appearing before them. Only Indra was able to recognise the Yaksha who had a bewitching feminine beauty and grace as none other than the Supreme Spirit. The sage Aupamanyu's analysis shows that 'Indra' has this designation just because he had the unique distinction of recognising the Para Brahman.

The Aranyakas also speak to the same effect. The Aitareya Aranyaka says —

“ Idam ityachakshate ”

The term 'Idam' is connotative of the Brahman. Indra is known alternatively as 'Indra' or 'Idandra' by virtue of being able to 'see' the reality of the Brahman. This is the purport of this text.

49. The author of the Nirukta reads into the term 'Kavi' the signification of such designations as 'Manishi', which are the names of a 'Medhavi', a known. (Nirukta—3,15)

Also compare the statement —

“ Medhavi kavih kavaterva ” (Nirukta—12,13)

The term 'Kavi', deriving from the root 'Kram' would signify 'one who has transcendental vision', or deriving

from the root 'Kav', would signify 'one who sings the praise of'.

Both these interpretattions would indicate the type of intellectual and emotional faculty that would grasp the truth of all things. In other words, a 'Kavi' is one that has an uncommon, and almost an unearthly power to know the past, the present and the future. In order to explain the nature of the poet (Kavi), the author of the Nirukta cites the mantra relating to Savita, which runs — 'Visva rupani Kavih' (RK. Sam. V 81, 2) 'Kavi' imports one who, through his rare power, can make the (ordinary) people of the world see, at least to some extent, things which the world cannot normally perceive.

50. "Sahasra Suryam" (RK. Sam. X 154, 5) "Sahasranayana" (lit —a thousand eyes) may be interpreted as persons that have a thousand eyes, or those that can lead thousands of followers on the right path. Being leaders or guides to thousands would mean that Kavi's are persons who can themselves grasp the inner principle of all things and can, therefore, enlighten others too in the same direction.

51. समुद्रे अन्तः कवयो विचक्षते मरीचीनां पदमिच्छन्ति वेधसः । X 177.1.

52. ऋतस्य पदं कवयो निपान्ति गुहा नामानि दधिरे पराणि ॥

RK. Sam. X 5.2.

Also cf. 10.71.1. & c.

53. "Rshati param" The term 'Rshi' deriving from the root 'Rsh', signifies a 'Knower', in-as-much as he crosses, through his knowledge, the very limits of (and limitations of) Samsara or earthly existence.

It is also possible to derive the term from the root 'drs', to perceive. Sayana, in interpreting the term 'Rshi-Krt' (RK. Sam. I 13, 6) and the term 'Rshimanah' (RK. Sam. IX 96, 18) — and in other similar contexts — explains the first as 'darsanakari' i. e. one who sees

(the truth) and the second as 'darsana silamanah' i. e. persons the bent of whose mind is to perceive (the truth).

The well-known term 'Darsana' used as the equivalent of 'Philosophical knowledge', also lends support to this interpretation (of Sayana):

'Agnih eedyah' (I 1, 2),

'Tameva ahuh' (X 107, 6).

In these and other such contexts also, the term 'Rshi' is used in RK Samhita in the same sense as the Kavi who has the transcendental vision. (cf. Monier Williams, Sanskrit-English Dictionary)

The 'Rshi' is also well known as 'Suri', one who has the insight to comprehend the hidden principle of the Universe and one who has the transcendental vision (to see the truth beyond the Universe).

'Tad vishnoh Suryat' (RK Sam. I 22; 2.

In this and other similar contexts also, the unearthly power of vision possessed by the Suri is eulogised.

54. तासां नि चिक्युः कवयो निदानं परेषु या गुह्येषु व्रतेषु । X 114.2.

पतङ्गमक्तमसुरस्य मायया हृदा पश्यन्ति मनसा विपश्चितः । X 117.1.

55. अहं ब्रह्मास्मीति । तस्मात्तत्सर्वमभवत् तद्यो यो देवानां प्रत्यबुध्यत स एव

तदभवत्तथर्षीणां तथा मनुष्याणां तद्धैतत् पश्यन् ऋषिर्वामदेवः

प्रतिपेदेऽहं मनुभवं सूर्यश्चेति । BR U. I 4.10; RV IV 26.

56. ऐ ड. II 4.

57. कतरा पूर्वा कतरापरायोः कथा जाते कवयः को विवेद ।

इयं विसृष्टिर्यत आ बभूव यदि वा दधे यदि वा न ।

यो अस्याध्यक्षः परमे व्योमन्तसो अङ्ग वेद यदि वा न वेद ॥ X 129.7.

(सर्वज्ञ ईश्वर एव तां सृष्टिं जानीयात् नान्य इत्यर्थः — सा. भा.)

58. Despite the woeful accumulations superstition and degrading custom that had clung to her and borne her down she (India) had never wholly forgotten the inspiration that some of the wisest of her children, at the dawn of history,

had given her in the upanishads. Their keen minds, ever restless and ever striving and exploring, had not sought refuge in blind dogma or grown complacent in the routine observance of dead forms of ritual and creed. They had demanded not a personal relief from suffering in the present or a place in a paradise to come, but light and understanding.

In the most famous of the Prayers recited daily even today by millions, the Gayatri Mantra (गायत्री), the call is for knowledge, for enlightenment.

Jawaharlal Nehru – Autobiography, Chap. LIII.

“When I repeat the Gayatri Mantra, I remind myself that Earth, Air and Sky are a glory. If one in a hundred of those who repeat it would do the same, India would lead the world in science.”

Prof. J. B. S. Haldane

Science and the Enquiring Mind.

59. कस्मिन्नु भगवो विज्ञाते सर्वमिदं विज्ञातं भवतीति ॥ M.U. I 1.3.

Chapter – IV

1. देवस्त्वष्टा सविता विश्वरूपः । III 55.19.
2. तत्सविता वोऽमृतत्वमासुवदगोह्यं यच्छ्रवयन्त ऐतन ।
त्यं चिच्चमसमसुरस्य भक्षणमेकं सन्तमकृणुता चतुर्वयम् ॥ I 110.3.
3. Passages like I-161.11. contain अगोह्य in the place of आदित्य.
4. ऐ ब्रा. III-30.
5. RV. IV-54.4.
6. “सविता सत्यधर्मा” X 34.8.

7. बृहत्सुम्नः प्रसवीता निवेशनो जगतः स्थातुरुभयस्य यो वशी ॥ IV 53.6.
8. विश्वस्य हि श्रुष्टये देव ऊर्ध्वः प्र बाहवा पृथुपाणिः सिसर्ति ।
भापश्चिदस्य व्रत आ निमृग्रा अयं चिद्वातो रमते परिजमन् ॥ II 38.2.
9. उदुष्य देवः सविता ययाम हिरण्ययीममर्ति यामशिश्नेत् ।
नूनं भगो हव्यो मानुषेभिर्वि यो रत्ना पुरुवसुर्दधाति ॥ VII 38.1.
10. ऋतस्य बुध्न उषसामिषण्यन्वृषा मही रोदसी आविवेश ।
मही मित्रस्य वरुणस्य माया चन्द्रेव भानुं वि दधे पुरुत्रा ॥ III 61.7.
11. हिरण्यपक्षं वरुणस्य दूतं । X 123.6.
12. हिरण्ययेन सविता रथेना देवो याति । I 35.2.
13. वारुणो वा अश्वः । तै. ब्रा. III 9.16.1.
14. “Varuna’s horse is none other than the fiery races who pursue his diurnal course across the all encompassing arch of heaven, the sphere of Varuna, the All Ruler. It is in the form of the horse that the Sun is thus lauded in the hymn in praise of Asvamedha.”

EGGLING,

The Sacred Books of the East. Vol. XLIV.
cf. p. XIX to XX.

15. सवितृ II 28.2; III 33.6; IV 53.4; X 34.8; X 139.3.
वरुणः VI 70 1; VII 86.1; VIII 41.10; VIII 42.1. etc.
16. उत रात्रीमुभयतः परीयस उत मित्रो भवसि देव धर्मभिः । V 81.4.
17. तस्य हैतस्य पुरुषस्य रूपम् । यथा महारजनं वासो यथा प्राण्ड्वाविकं
यथेन्द्रगोपो यथाग्न्यर्चिर्यथा पुण्डरीकम् ॥ बृ. उ. II 3.6.
18. अथ यदेवैतदादित्यस्य शुक्लं भाः य एषोऽन्तरादित्य हिरण्यमयः
पुरुषो दृश्यते हिरण्यमयः इमश्रुर्हिरण्यकेश आप्रणस्वात्सर्व एव सुवर्णः ।
छा. उ. I 6.6.
19. छा उ. III 11.1-3.
20. एतं सेतुं तीर्त्वापि नक्तमहरेवाभिनिष्पद्यते । छा. उ. VIII 4.2.

21. एवं बोधप्रकाशाभ्यां समस्तस्य प्रपञ्चस्य उपकुर्वाणं श्रेयोऽर्थिभिर्भजनीयं
सूर्यात्मना स्थितं पारमेश्वरं तेजः । तै. स. भा. I 6.6.
22. छा. उ. V 12.1.
23. सत्स्वनेकेषु छन्दस्सु गायत्र्या एव ब्रह्मज्ञानद्वारतयोपादानं प्राधान्यात् ।
सोमाहरणादितरच्छन्दोक्षराहरणेनेतरच्छन्दोव्याप्त्या च सर्वसवनव्यापक-
त्वाच्च यज्ञे प्राधान्यं गायत्र्याः । छा. उ. शङ्करभाष्यम् III 12.1.
24. अव यच्छयेनो अस्वनीदध द्योर्वि यद्यदि वात ऊहुः पुरन्धि ।
सृजद्यदस्मा अव ह क्षिपज्यां कृशानुरस्ता मनसा भुण्णन् ॥ IV 27.3.
25. एव विद्वान् अस्माच्छरीरभेदादूर्ध्व उत्क्रम्यामुष्मिन् स्वर्गे लोके सर्वान्का-
मानाप्त्वामृतः समभवत्समभवत् । ऐ. आ. II 5.
26. कद्रूश्च वै सुपर्णी चात्मरूपयोरस्पर्धेतां गायत्री कनिष्ठा छन्दसां सती यज्ञ-
मुखं परीयाय धीतमिव हि मन्यन्ते । तै. सं. VI 1.7.1-3.
27. सोमो वै राजा गन्धर्वेष्वासीत् सोमं राजानमक्रीणन् ।
ऐ. ब्रा. V 27.
28. सोमो वै राजामुष्मिँलोक आसीत् तं देवाश्च ऋषयश्चाभ्यध्यायन्
पद्भ्यां च मुखेन च सोमं राजानं समगृभ्णान् । ऐ. ब्रा. XIII 26.
29. cf. ऐ. ब्रा.
30. गायत्रीछन्दसां माता । तै. उ. IV 26.
31. गायत्रं पुरस्ताद्गायति अग्निर्वै गात्रमग्निमेवास्यै तच्छिरः करोत्यथो शिरः ।
श. ब्रा. IX 1.2.35.
32. सा यदक्षिणेन पदा सवनानामग्रियो मुख्यो भवति ।
ऐ. ब्रा. XIII 27.
33. तद्वीर्येणैव यच्छयेनो भूत्वा गायत्री प्रथमा छन्दसां युज्यते ।
श. ब्रा. III 9.4.10.
34. अग्निर्वै गायत्री ; गायत्रमग्रेऽछन्दः । तै. सं. II 2.5.5.
तै. ब्रा. I 1.5.
35. RV. X 130.4.

36. अभिस्वपूभिर्मिथो वपन्त वातस्वनसः श्येना अस्पृधान् । VII 56.3.
 क्राणा रुद्रा मरुतो विश्वकृष्टयो दिवः श्येनासो असुरस्य नीळयः ।
 तेभिश्चष्टे वरुणो मित्रो अर्यमेन्द्र । X 92.6.
37. श. ब्रा. XII 1.2.
38. तै. ब्रा. III 8.4.
39. तै. ब्रा. III 12; I 2.
 तुभ्यं ता अङ्गिरस्तम VIII 43.18.
 अश्याम तं काममग्ने VI 5.7.
40. सुपर्णाः शोभनगमना रश्मयः सा. भा. II 64.21.
41. अथ यत्किञ्चेदमार्द्रं तद्रेतसोऽसृजत तदु सोम एतावद्वा इदगं सर्वमन्नं
 चैवान्नादश्च सोम एवान्नमग्निरन्नादः सैषा ब्रह्मणोऽतिसृष्टिः ।
 बृ. उ. I 4.6.
42. रविमध्ये स्थितः सोमो सोममध्ये हुताशनः । मै. उ. VI 38.
43. महत्तत्सोमो महिषश्चकाराषां यद्गर्भोऽवृणीत देवान् ।
 अदधादिन्द्रे पवमान ओजोऽअजयत्सूर्ये ज्योतिरिन्दुः ॥ IX 97.41.
44. त्वं समुद्रो असि विश्ववित्कवे तवेमाः पञ्च प्रदिशो विधर्मणि ।
 त्वं द्यां च पृथिवीं चाति जग्निषे तव ज्योतींषि पवमान सूर्यः ।
 IX 86.29.
45. The poet of IX-86.29, while saying "Those are the heavenly ocean (समुद्र), thine are lights (ज्योतींषि), O Pavamana, thine the Sun, seems to conceive Soma, as the bright ether, the azure ' sea of light ' generally."
 EGGLING,
 The Sacred books of the East, Vol. XXVI. p.-XV
46. गायत्रं प्रउगं कुर्यादित्याहुस्तेजो वै ब्रह्मवर्चसं गायत्री तेजस्वी ब्रह्मवर्चसी
 भवतीति ब्रह्म वै गायत्री ब्रह्मणैव तद्ब्रह्म प्रतिपद्यते ।
 ऐ. आ. I 1.3.

47. युञ्जते मन उत युञ्जते धियो विप्रा विप्रस्य बृहतो विपश्चितः ।
वि होत्रा दधे वयुनाविदेक इन्मही देवस्य सवितुः परिष्टुतिः ॥ V 81.1.
48. R.V. VI 9.
49. “तथा चेतोऽर्पणनिगदात्” तथा गाथात्राख्यच्छन्दोद्वारेण तदनुगते ब्रह्मणि
चेतसः अर्पणं चित्तसमाधनं अनेन ब्राह्मणवाक्येन निगद्यते “गायत्री वा
ईदं सर्वमिति” ब्रा. सू. II 15.
50. तदनन्यत्वमारम्भणशब्दादिभ्यः; ब्र. सू. II 1.14.
51. सर्वेषु भूतेष्वेतमेव ब्रह्मेत्याचक्षते । स एष संवत्सरसमानश्चक्षुर्मयः
श्रोत्रमयच्छन्दोमयो मनोमयो बाहूमय आत्मा स य एवमेवं शंसति ॥
ऐ. आ. III 2.3.
52. भूमिरन्तरिक्षं द्यौः बृ. उ. V 14.1.
53. सैषा गायत्र्येतस्मिस्तुरीये दर्शते पदे परो रजसि प्रतिष्ठिता तद्वैतत्सत्ये
प्रतिष्ठितम् । बृ. उ. V 14.4.
54. सर्वं ह्येतद् ब्रह्मायमात्मा ब्रह्म सोऽयमात्मा चतुष्पात् । मा. उ. II
55. अदृष्टो द्रष्टाश्रुतः श्रोतामतो मन्ताविज्ञातो विज्ञाता । III 7.2.3.
56. एष स्य भानुरुदियर्ति युज्यते रथः परिज्मा दिवो अस्य सानवि ।
पृक्षासो अस्मिन् मिथुना आधि त्रयो दृतिस्तुरीयो मधुनो वि रक्षते ॥
R.V. IV 45.1.
57. अथ य एषोऽन्तरे हृत्पुष्कर एव । अर्वाग्विचरत एतौ प्राणादित्यौ एता
उपासीतोमित्येतदक्षरेण व्याहृतिभिः सावित्त्रया चेति ॥ मै. उ. VI 2.
58. केश्याग्निं केशी विषं केशी विभर्ति रोदसी ।
केशी विश्वं स्वर्दृशे केशीदं ज्योतिरुच्यते ॥ X 136.1.
59. अग्निर्वायुरादित्यः कालो यः प्राणोऽन्नं ब्रह्मा रुद्रो विष्णुरित्येकेऽन्यमभि-
धायन्ति । मै. उ. IV 5.
60. तद्ब्रह्म तज्ज्योतिः स आदित्यः स वा एषा ओमित्यतदात्मा भवत् स
त्रेधात्मानं व्यकुरुता ओमिति तिस्रो मात्रा एताभिः सर्वमिदं ओत प्रोतं च ।
मै. उ. VI 3.

61. तस्यैतस्य परापरब्रह्मरूपस्य अक्षरस्य ओमित्येतस्योपव्याख्यानम् ।
62. स य एतदेवं विद्वानक्षारं प्रणौत्येतदेवाक्षरं स्वरममृतमभयं प्रविशति ॥
63. प्रणवो धनुः शरो ह्यात्मा ब्रह्म तल्लक्ष्यमुच्यते ।
अप्रमत्तेन वेद्व्यं शरवत्तन्मयो भवेत् ॥ मु. उ. II 2.4.
64. यथा पादोदरस्त्वचा विनिर्मुच्यत एवं ह वै स पाप्मना विनिर्मुक्तः स
सामभिरुन्नोयते ब्रह्मलोकम् । प्र. उ. V 5.
65. ऋग्भिरेतं यजुर्भिरन्तरिक्षं सामाभिर्यत्तत्तत्कवयो वेदयन्ते ।
तमोङ्कारेणैवायतनेनान्वेति विद्वान् यत्तच्छान्तमजरममृतमभयं परं चेति ॥
प्र. उ. V 7.
66. ऋष्यनुस्मरणमप्युपासनाङ्गम् ॥ तै. उ. शा. भा. I 5.
67. अथ खलु य उद्गीथः स प्रणवो यः प्रणवः स उद्गीथ इत्यसौ वा
आदित्य उद्गीथ एव प्रणव ओमिति ह्येष स्वरज्ञेति । छा. उ. I 5.1.
68. तद्ब्रह्म तस्यैतस्य तदेव रूपं यदमुष्य रूपं । छा. उ. I 7.5.
69. R.V. III 62.10.
70. ओं तस्सदिति निर्देशस्त्रिविधो ब्रह्मणः स्मृतः । भ. गी. XVII 23.
71. छा. उ. III 14.1.
72. “तत्तस्य सुगं सुलुक्” इति षष्ठ्या लुक् ।
तस्य सवितुः देवस्य दानादिगुणयुक्तस्य ॥ तै. स. भा. I 5.6.
तत् here is an adjective to सवितृ. But the interpretation of
the same passage in the Taittiriya Aranyaka is a bit
different.
सवितुः देवस्य प्रेरयितुः तत् तादृशं वरेण्यं भर्गः तेजः । तै. आ. I-11.
Here it is considered to be the adjective of तेजः.
73. विश्वा रूपाणि प्रति मुञ्चते कविः प्रासावीद्भद्रं द्विपदे चतुष्पदे ।
वि नाकमख्यत्सविता वरेण्योऽनु प्रयाणमुषसो वि राजति ॥
RV. V 81.2.

74. उतेशिषे प्रसवस्य त्वमेक इदुत पूषा भवसि देव यामभिः ।
उतेदं विश्वं भुवनं वि राजसि ॥ RV. V 81.5.
75. बृ. उ. VI 5-9.
76. भाभिः किरणैरधिष्ठानधर्मैरस्य गतिर्गमनम् ।
77. भर्जयति जगत् संहरतीति रुद्रो भर्ग इति ॥
78. भ इति भासयतीमान् लोकान् ।
र इति रञ्जयतीमानि भूतानि ।
ग इति गच्छन्त्यस्मिन्नागच्छत्यस्मादिमाः प्रजास्तस्माद्भरगत्वाद्भर्गः ॥
मै. उ. VI 7.
79. दिव्यते क्रीडते यस्माद्रोचते द्योतते दिवि ।
तस्माद्देव इति प्रोक्तः ॥
-

INDEX

[I deeply regret that in the printing of the body of the work the necessary diacritical marks could not be used and sometimes, compound words such as R̥k-Samhitā and R̥g-Veda appear as two words. The following index incorporates a correction of these anamolies.]

A

Abja, 21
 Aditi, 22, 34, 36
 Āditya, 16, 19, 21, 25, 27-34, 46, 50, 52, 57, 61, 71, 72, 73, 77, 79, 82-85, 89, 105, 112, 115, 121
 Āditya-cakra, 28
 Āditya-loka, 122
 Ādityas, 50, 62
 Āditya's journey, 117
 Āditya-Vidyā, 25
 Advayāvin, 41
 Agni, 16, 17, 21, 30-33, 50, 63, 64, 82, 99
 Agni-Gāyatrī-Śyena, 101-103
 Agōhya, 87
 Aitareya Āraṇyaka, 29, 79, 93, 94, 98, 99, 107, 109, 130
 Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, 99, 104
 Ājānadevas, 15
 Ākāśa, 25
 Akṣara, 28, 124
 Amati, 87, 88
 Amśa, 32
 Ananta, 25
 Aṇimā, 18
 Aṅgiras, 65
 Anṛta, 39, 40
 Anuṣṭup, 99, 107, 113
 Aparā-Brahman, 116
 Aparā-Vidyā, 9
 Aryaman, 32
 Asat, 19, 22, 23
 Asurasya, 88
 Āśvins, 14, 34
 Atharva-Veda, 55, 86
 Ātman, 6, 17, 26
 Atomic magnitude, 18

B

Bādhva, 29
 Bhagavadgītā, 5, 68
 Bhārati, 50
 Bharga, 81, 133, 134
 Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara, 90, 130
 Bliss, 4
 Brahma-Cakra
 (see Āditya-Cakra), 68
 Brahman, 5, 6, 27, 107, 109
 Brahmanaspati, 15, 51
 Brahma-Vādin, 123
 Br̥hadāraṇyakopaniṣat, 27, 30, 54, 114, 115
 Br̥haddevatā, 18, 30, 33
 Br̥haspati, 34, 51, 57
 Br̥hat, 21
 Br̥hatī, 99, 107
 Br̥hatsāma, 101
 British-Museum, 6

C

Camasa, 84, 85
 Chāndogyopaniṣat, 9, 11, 42, 82, 91, 110, 111, 115, 124, 128, 130
 Candra, 29, 34
 Charity, 68
 Cosmic form, 54
 Cosmic Law (see R̥ta), 60
 Cosmic Light, 30, 31, 34, 50, 51, 57
 Cosmic Person, 54
 Cosmic spirit, 34, 54, 58, 121
 Cosmic wheel (see Āditya-Cakra), 57
 Cosmos, 20
 Creation, 22, 23, 44, 57
 Creature's womb, 83

D

Dadhici, 25
Dakṣa, 56
Darśata, 112
Dharma, 86
Dhenuḥ, 57
Dhyāna, 109
Dhṛta-Vrata, 39
Duroṇasat, 21
Dvaya, 40, 41
Dyāvā-Prithivī, 34

E

Einstein, Albert, 2, 3
Eternal Light, 105
Existence, 4

G

Gambling, 65
Gandharva, 57, 96, 101, 104, 105
Gāndharvī, 57
Gaṅgā, 61
Gayāḥ, 113
Gāyatrī, 78, 79, 80, Chap. IV, (83-138)
Gāyatrī, Agni and Śyena, 101-103
Gāyatrī and Soma, 91
Garutman, 21
Goja, 21
Golden eagle, 96
Grace, 61, 63, 105
Gr̥tsamada, 50
Grīṣma, 58

H

Haldane, J. B. S., n33
Hamsa, 21
Harmony, Cosmic, 5, 36
Hiraṇyagarbha, 21, 105
Hotā, 23

I

Indeterminacy, Principle of, 4
Iḷā, 50
Indra, 17, 20, 25, 26, 31, 33, 39, 62, 63, 64, 82, 83
Indra and Varuṇa, 34
Īśa, 86
Īśvara, 1, 13, 17, 23, 24, 25, 26, 48, 77

J

Jagatī, 95-100
Jātavedas, 26, 42, 102
Jñāna, 107, 108

K

Kadru, 94
Karma, 107-109
Karmanya, 71
Kātha Upaniṣat, 9
Kena Upaniṣat, 11
Keśin, 30
Kṛṣṭi, 28
Kṛśānu, 93

L

Law of Action, 16
Law of the Cosmos, 36, 37
Light Divine, 5, 19, 28, 29, 30, 76, 82
Light years, 2
Lokapālas, 27

M

Madhuvidyā, 25
Mādhyamikā Vāk, 52, 57
Mahīdhara, 90
Maitrī Upaniṣat, 123
Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣat, 116, 123
Mātariśvan, 21
Materialism, 2
Mayobhūḥ, 67
Max-Muller, 7, n5
Mitra, 32
Mitrā-Varuṇā, 33, 34, 38, 50, 90

N

Nābhi, 28, 44, 45
Nārada, 9
Nehru, J., n 33
Nirukta, 18, 19, 32, 33, 85
Niyati, 26

P

Palita, 23
Pañcajanāḥ, 22
Pañktiḥ, 99, 107
Para-Brahman, 10, 11, 19, 20, 25, 49, 57, 74, 77, 81, 82, 90, 104, 106, 108, 109, 110, 115, 116, 117

Paramātman, 5, 78
 Paramjyotiḥ, (Cosmic Light), 29, 31
 Parjanya, 22, 39, 42
 Parorajāḥ, 113
 Pāvīravī Kanyā, 57
 Plotinus, 4, n 1
 Plurality, 14
 Polytheism, 7
 Prajāpati, 17-22, 25, 45-49, 54, 57, 58, 108
 Prakṛti, 23, 54
 Prāṇa, 54
 Praṇava, 121, 123, 128, 129
 Praśnopaniṣat, 54
 Pratigara, 123
 Pra-u-ga śāstra, 107
 Pravargya, 57
 Principle of Indeterminacy, 4
 Principle of Sacrifice, 57
 Prime Cause, 57
 Puruṣa, 54, 55, 58
 Puruṣa-Sūkta, 118
 Pūṣan, 35, 86

R

Rādhākrishnan, S. n 2
 Rajaram Mohan Roy, 6
 Rathanthara-Sāman, 101
 Rbhus, 65, 83, 85, 86, 87
 Reality, Supreme, 4-7, 11, 12, 16, 18-20, 23, 27, 28, 79, 90, 116
 Rk-Samhitā—Passim
 Rg-Veda—Passim
 Rosen, 6
 Rṣi, 19, 20, 26
 Rta, Chap. II (37-42), 61, 62, 87
 Rtaja, 38
 Rtvārdha, 38, 39
 Rudra, 32
 Rudras, 50

S

Sabhya, 71
 Sacrifice, Purpose of, 57
 Śākapūṇi, 52
 Sāman, 19, 69
 Śambhu, 67
 Samsāra, 17

Samvatsara, 27, 29
 Sanatkumāra, 9
 Śaṅkarācārya, 17, 92, 99, 109, 123, 136
 Sarasvān, 57
 Sarasvatī, 50, 55, 57
 Śarat, 58
 Sat, 22, 23
 Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa, 76, 101
 Satya, 38
 Savitṛ, 17, 35, 61, 79, 81-83, 85, 87, 90, 101, 129
 Savitṛ and Varuṇa, 87-89
 Sāyana, 25, 35, 52, 53, 55, 76, 94, 99, 105, 118
 Science, 2
 Scientists, 3
 Sloth, 64
 Somarāja, 97
 Sorokin, P. n 1
 Spider, 16, 96, 103, 104, 105
 Śuciṣat, 21
 Suparṇa, 92, 94, 103, 105
 Suparṇī, 94
 Supreme Being, 122
 Sūrya, 64
 Sūryā and Pūṣan, 69
 Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣat, 54
 Śyena, 93, 94

T

Taittirīya Samhitā, 90
 Trayī, 56, 111, 112
 Triṣṭup, 95, 97, 98, 99, 100
 Trita, 33
 Truth, Cosmic, 5, 23
 Turiyapada, (Fourth foot), 113, 115-119

U

Udgītha, 128
 Upaniṣat, 17, 19, 58
 Uṣas, 17, 31, 50
 Uṣṇik, 99, 107

V

Vaidyutāgni, 50
 Vaiśvānara, 26, 32, 39, 43
 Vājasaneyya Samhitā, 101
 Vajra, 85

Vāma, 23
Vāmadeva, 93
Vareṇya, 81
Varuṇa, 22, 38, 39, 40, 63, 83, 87, 88, 89
Varuṇa and Savitr, 87, 89
Vasanta, 58
Vasu, 21
Vāyu, 16, 30, 62
Vedānta, 90
Vedic Seers, 64
Vidathya, 79
Vijñāna, 76
Vīrapatnī, 57
Virāṭ, 54, 55

Viśvakarma, 17, 20, 47-51, 56, 58, 68
Viśvāpsu, 32
Viśvatantu, 109
Vratapa, 38
Vyāhṛti, 121, 122, 126, 128

W

Wheel, Cosmic, 26, 27
Wheel of Āditya, 37
Whitehead, A. N., n 1, 2

Y

Yagña, 41-59, 108, 109
Yakṣa, 54
Yugas, 15

Table 1
Table 2
Table 3
Table 4
Table 5
Table 6
Table 7
Table 8
Table 9
Table 10
Table 11
Table 12
Table 13
Table 14
Table 15
Table 16
Table 17
Table 18
Table 19
Table 20
Table 21
Table 22
Table 23
Table 24
Table 25
Table 26
Table 27
Table 28
Table 29
Table 30
Table 31
Table 32
Table 33
Table 34
Table 35
Table 36
Table 37
Table 38
Table 39
Table 40
Table 41
Table 42
Table 43
Table 44
Table 45
Table 46
Table 47
Table 48
Table 49
Table 50
Table 51
Table 52
Table 53
Table 54
Table 55
Table 56
Table 57
Table 58
Table 59
Table 60
Table 61
Table 62
Table 63
Table 64
Table 65
Table 66
Table 67
Table 68
Table 69
Table 70
Table 71
Table 72
Table 73
Table 74
Table 75
Table 76
Table 77
Table 78
Table 79
Table 80
Table 81
Table 82
Table 83
Table 84
Table 85
Table 86
Table 87
Table 88
Table 89
Table 90
Table 91
Table 92
Table 93
Table 94
Table 95
Table 96
Table 97
Table 98
Table 99
Table 100

Table 101
Table 102
Table 103
Table 104
Table 105
Table 106
Table 107
Table 108
Table 109
Table 110
Table 111
Table 112
Table 113
Table 114
Table 115
Table 116
Table 117
Table 118
Table 119
Table 120
Table 121
Table 122
Table 123
Table 124
Table 125
Table 126
Table 127
Table 128
Table 129
Table 130
Table 131
Table 132
Table 133
Table 134
Table 135
Table 136
Table 137
Table 138
Table 139
Table 140
Table 141
Table 142
Table 143
Table 144
Table 145
Table 146
Table 147
Table 148
Table 149
Table 150
Table 151
Table 152
Table 153
Table 154
Table 155
Table 156
Table 157
Table 158
Table 159
Table 160
Table 161
Table 162
Table 163
Table 164
Table 165
Table 166
Table 167
Table 168
Table 169
Table 170
Table 171
Table 172
Table 173
Table 174
Table 175
Table 176
Table 177
Table 178
Table 179
Table 180
Table 181
Table 182
Table 183
Table 184
Table 185
Table 186
Table 187
Table 188
Table 189
Table 190
Table 191
Table 192
Table 193
Table 194
Table 195
Table 196
Table 197
Table 198
Table 199
Table 200

Opinions about This Book

“
I hope that the book will help students to realise the unity of the country and the purpose of our Nation... ..”

—*Dr. S. Radhakrishnan.*

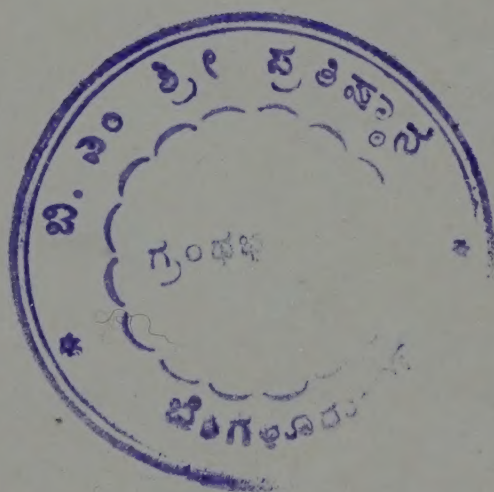
*

*

*

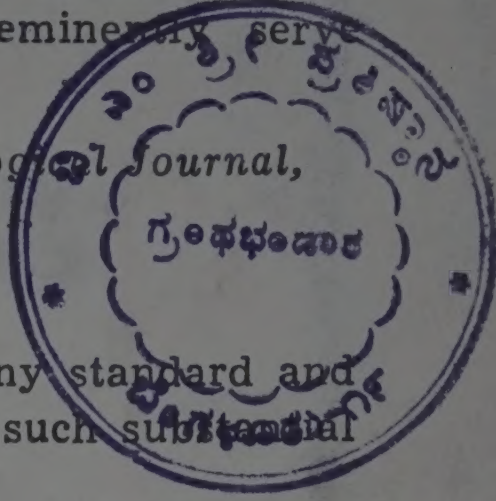
“ I am glad that you have departed from the beaten track and taken lines on which I have also been thinking and developing some ideas... ..”

—*Dr. V. Raghavan.*



"In an elaborate but instructive introduction, the author presents the background of Vedic Civilization, outlines the different trends of thought and indicates how the hymns reflect the high philosophic and scientific view of Cosmic Unity.. . . .The book would eminently serve the purpose for which it is intended."

—The Visvesvarananda Indological Journal,
Hosiarpur, Vol. V, P. . . .



"These are scholarly production by any standard and I congratulate you on producing works of such substantial scholarship."

—Prof. V. K. Gokak.

"It thrills me to think that such a great work has appeared in Kannada and that there is so learned and devoted a scholar in our midst to give us such splendid books."

—Dr. D. V. Gundappa.

"ಧರ್ಮದ ದೃಷ್ಟಿಯಿಂದ ಸ್ವಾರಸ್ಯವಾದ, ಗಂಭೀರವಾದ ಋಗ್ವೇದ ಮಂತ್ರಗಳನ್ನು ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಕಲೆಹಾಕಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಸಾಂಪ್ರದಾಯಿಕ ಪಾಠಕ್ಕೆ ಅನುಕೂಲವಾಗುವಂತೆ ಸ್ವರಿತ, ಉದಾತ್ತ ನಿರ್ದೇಶನವನ್ನು ಮಾಡಿ ಋಕ್ಕುಗಳನ್ನು ಕನ್ನಡ ಲಿಪಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾಣಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ. . . . ವಿದ್ವತ್ತು ಖಚಿತವಾಗಿರುವಂತೆಯೇ ಭಾಷೆ ಸರಸವಾಗಿದೆ. ದೃಷ್ಟಿ ಉದಾತ್ತವಾಗಿರುವಂತೆಯೇ ನಿರೂಪಣೆ ಗಂಭೀರವಾಗಿದೆ. ಗ್ರಂಥದ ರೂಪವೂ ಸುಭಗವಾಗಿದೆ."

—ಜೀವನ.

" ಋಗ್ವೇದದಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರತಿಪಾದಿತವಾಗಿರುವ ತತ್ತ್ವಕಲ್ಪನೆಯನ್ನೂ ಜೀವನಧರ್ಮವನ್ನೂ ಪ್ರೌಢವೂ ಸುಸಂಸ್ಕೃತವೂ ಗಂಭೀರವೂ ಆದ ಭಾಷೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕ್ರಮಬದ್ಧವಾದ ರೀತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ನಿರೂಪಿಸುತ್ತದೆ. . . . ಸ್ವತಂತ್ರ ವಿಚಾರಪರರಾದ ಚಕ್ರವರ್ತಿಗಳಿಂದ ಇನ್ನೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಹೆಚ್ಚಾಗಿ ವೇದಸರಸ್ವತಿಯ ಸೇವೆ ನಡೆಯಬೇಕೆಂದು ಆಶಿಸುತ್ತೇನೆ."

—ಪ್ರಬುದ್ಧ ಕರ್ಣಾಟಕ.

IN ENGLISH

The problem of Evil in the Mahabharata.